

The COMPLETE CRUMB

COMICS

I CAN
HARDLY WAIT
TO HEAR
YOU
PLAY!



OH, I'M NOT
VERY GOOD AT
ALL, BUT I HOPE
TO BE SOME
DAY...

R. Crumb

"Spring of '64," Robert recalls. "The world seemed full of promise." As he plugged away on American Greetings Corporation's new pseudo-hip Hi Brow series changes were slowly taking place below the outwardly dreary surface of his daily routine. His drawing ability was expanding in quantum jumps: not just his new mastery of inking, rendering, and color media, but also the closely-observed and mordantly depicted satirical content of his concepts. Naturally this got no exposure through the official production of "AG." The nascent Crumb essence was instead birthed in a series of private sketchbooks and notebooks, which only years later (and then fragmentarily) reached the public eye.

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In September, Robert arranged a freelance-by-mail setup with American Greetings: They would send him Hi Brow card ideas, he would send them back finished art, they would send him payments of around \$25 per card—enough, he figured, for a frugal but secure living at the 1964 rate of exchange. As a going-away present, his Hi Brow cronies gave him an enormous, thick hardbound book of blank art paper. In the following months it was destined to be filled with the visualized wanderings of another questing '60s rover: Fritz the Cat.

Newly married, in a strange land thousands of miles from America, he collated the confusion of inspirations and images that both attracted and repelled him about his native country, its inhabitants, and himself: the beatniks and bourgeois, folkers and rockers, blacks and radicals, poets and potheads. He conjured the lure of The Road, big fast cars, hitchhiking, bumming the railroads, crashing parties; even the understated narrow-tie cool of the JFK/LBJ-era government secret agents of paperback and television glory.

Robert dressed his less-than-Great society in animal skins, and into them he sent a cat named Fritz. Fritz had begun as a real cat, a pet of the Crumb family (though much of his imagined character came from another feline named Fred). Robert first pencilled short, lighthearted Fritz adventures in small, blue-lined composition books. But the impressive, blank, waiting pages of "the big book" seemed to demand more, both of the artist and his creation.

Fritz became a picaresque, nine-lived stand-in for Robert himself, enjoying the adventures his creator had only dreamed of in envious fantasy. Fritz was a glib talker, master of any situation, while Robert saw himself as tongue-tied and tense. Fritz was a ladies' man, a heartbreaker, while Robert 'til very recently had been a very reluctant virgin. Fritz was the center of a circle of friends and admirers; Robert, a loner. Fritz was the instigator for any kind of prank or spree, with no moral or ethical hangups; Robert suffered under a quarryload of familial inhibitions and Catholic guilt-trips.

Continued on back flap—

THE COMPLETE CRUMB

THE COMPLETE CRUMB

VOLUME 3

Starring
FRITZ the CAT

R. CRUMB

Edited by Gary Groth
with Robert Fiore

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS
7563 Lake City Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115

Editorial Coordination by Robert Fiore.
Design and Art Direction by Dale Crain.
Consulting Editor: Don Fiene.
Typesetting by Linda M. Gorell.
Color Separations by Rayson Film.

Gary Groth and Kim Thompson, Publishers.
Special Thanks to Glenn Bray, Mike Britt, Mark Burbey,
Brian Cleary, Al Davoren, Don Fiene, Caroline Kennemuth
and the American Greetings Corporation, Jay Lynch,
Bill Morse, Marty Pahl, and Jim Vadeboncoeur.

"Fritz Bugs Out" was first serialized in *Cavalier* from February to
October 1968; "The Silly Pigeons" and "Fritz the Cat, Magician"
were first published in *Promethean Enterprises* #3 in 1971;
"Fritz the Cat, Special Agent for the CIA" was first published in
R. Crumb's Head Comics in 1968;
"The Heap Years of the Auto" and "The Small Small Businessmen"
were first published in *Promethean Enterprises* #5 in 1974.

Introduction ©1988 Marty Pahl.
Back cover painting ©Aline Kominsky-Crumb.
Greeting cards on pages 96 to 100 and 111 to 127
©1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1988 American Greetings Corporation.
"Monster Greetings" trading cards ©1965 Topps Bubble Gum, Inc.
All other contents ©1964, 1965, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1974, 1988 Robert Crumb.

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material for reviews or notices must be obtained in writing from
Fantagraphics Books, Inc.
7563 Lake City Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115

Third Fantagraphics Books edition: June, 1999
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ISBN: (soft) 0-930193-75-X
ISBN (hard): 0-930193-76-8

Printed in Singapore by SNP Printing Pte Ltd

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The First Girl That Came Along

by Marty Pahls

It was a Gypsy palm reader, holding forth at the unromantic locale of Cleveland's East 105 and Euclid, who first told an unhappy young Robert Crumb, "You luck's gonna change." In the spring of 1964, her two-dollar prognostication began to come true.

"Spring of '64," Robert recalls. "The world seemed full of promise." Up until now, his world had seemed full of despair. Fleeing an impossible family situation in Philadelphia, depressed and marginally suicidal, armed with nothing but his raw 19-year-old talent and a few notebooks of pencilled drawings, he had landed at American Greetings Corporation, an assembly-line operation designed to churn out birthday and holiday cards with industrial efficiency and artistic monotony. As he plugged away on the firm's new pseudo-hip Hi Brow series, however, changes were slowly taking place below the outwardly dreary surface of his daily routine. His drawing ability was expanding in quantum jumps: not just his new mastery of inking, rendering, and color media, but also the closely-observed and mordantly depicted satirical content of his concepts. Naturally this got no exposure through the official production of "AG." The nascent Crumb essence was instead birthed in a series of private sketchbooks and notebooks, which only years later (and then fragmentarily) reached the public eye.

Also, and at long last, Robert was beginning to find friends—people who accepted him for himself, who sometimes even thought of him as some kind of indefinable, uncategorized genius. All his life he'd seen himself as a freak, a four-eyed, star-crossed, skinny loner, with a message impossible to communicate to an uncaring and uninterested world. But starting with the Hi Brow crew, and spreading out into the uneven ranks of Cleveland's students, bohemians, and post-beatniks, he was suddenly making contact in a way he'd feared himself incapable of.

He was even, miracle of miracles, meeting girls—and finding to his wonderment that he wasn't poison to them. One of the key players in the drama of extracting Robert Crumb from his own navel was a short, sharp-tongued young woman from Detroit

named Liz Johnston. She hung with an artsy-folksy fringe who frequented La Cave, a guitar-and-espresso basement near Case-Western Reserve University and not far from the third-floor walkup Robert and I shared on East 115 Street. Liz took an apartment at East Boulevard and Deering that became the nucleus for a sort of salon: "Apt Four," her establishment, was even intended by several regulars as the name of a literary mag, which (typically Cleveland) never got published.

"At the same time," Robert remembers, "the whole hippie thing was just beginning to coalesce. There were these guys from these black civil rights organizations hanging around that apartment. . . People were going down to Atlanta, Mississippi, and all that stuff." Race riots in East Cleveland and Little Italy, anti-nuclear marches, and Fair Play for Cuba (if not yet marijuana) were all part of the ferment in the Lake Erie air. At Apt Four, Robert rubbed shoulders with local poets, activists, artists, and musicians. Liz's boyfriend, Buzz Linhart, played jazz vibes and was "in and out of there, back and forth to New York"—a path Robert would soon follow. As the Dylan image began to stalk the land, Linhart switched to guitar and vocal, joining the new breed of coffee-house-spawned "singer-songwriters."

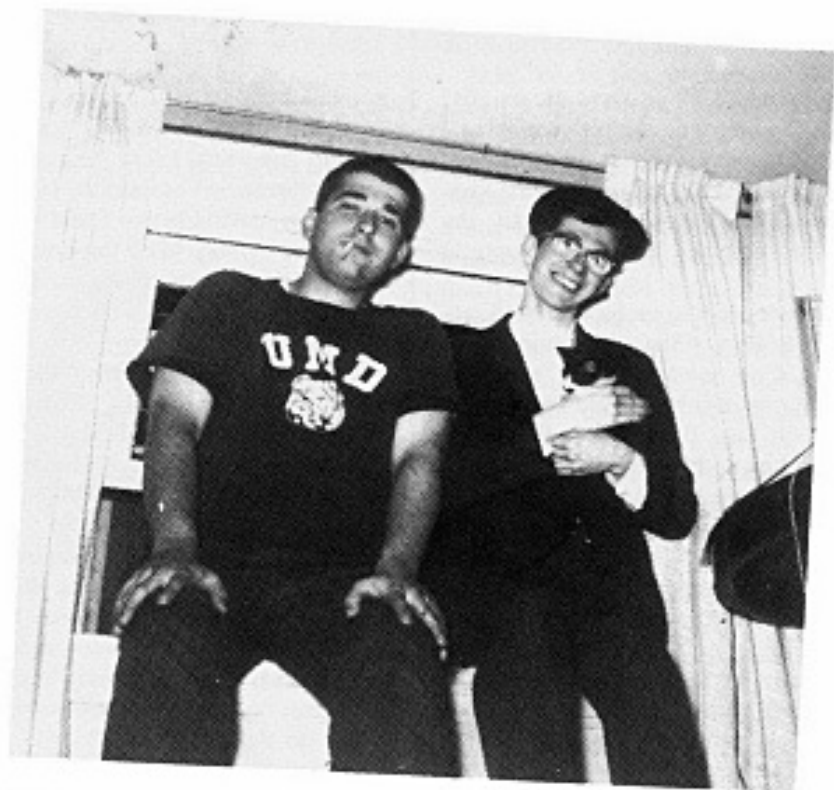
Liz was an aspiring artist, and encouraged Robert to take his sketchbook for walks along the lakefront, through parks, and into ethnic

neighborhoods, where he would draw while she chattered away, occasionally making a stab at a picture. These invariably failed to come up to Robert's, a constant source of frustration to her.

"Me and Liz tried to get it on sexually a couple of times," says Robert, "but it just didn't work. I wasn't that attracted to her. So she said, 'I've got just the girl for you, Robert.' Years after I kinda thought she did that to get even with me for not being interested in her."

What Liz did was introduce Robert to Dana Morgan, a Cuyahoga Community College student from middle-class Cleveland Heights. Robert had loaned Liz *The Big Yum Yum Book*, a gorgeous full-color fantasy (about a gigantically plump teenage girl and a scrawny, lovesick toad) drawn in a blank-paper book. Liz passed it on to Dana, described its lonely creator, and sat back to watch what would happen.

They met at Liz's pad. "Dana had the book with her and was hugging it to herself. She said, 'I really love this book! It's wonderful!' I was very attracted to her physically: a big robust creature, really beautiful Krishna-like face." Later, after LSD had entered their lives, a tripping Robert would stare at Dana's face as if it were a Hindu devotional painting. "Big oval brown eyes, real classic Jewish-looking face. Tall, really physically strong—big legs and all that." Had the toad





suddenly found his 18-year-old dream girl?

"I said, 'You intrigue me,' or something." Liz left, the conversation wound down, and they spend the rest of the night playing kissing games. Both were monumentally shy virgins, and remained so, for that night at least.

But they kept seeing each other, and, according to Robert, "She really jumped on me fast." One evening after work at American Greetings he arrived back at our apartment on East 115 Street to find Dana waiting for him in his bed. But it was two months, he claims, before they were able to overcome their shyness and consummate things.

Very soon, the inexperienced Robert found himself on a fast track geared to snuff out his new feeling of freedom. "Dana just glommed onto me so intensely that it kinda scared me off from her—threw me into a quandary. Not right from the first night: It took a few weeks. I never got over the feeling she wanted to suffocate me. It took me nine years to get away." She began, says Robert, to talk about this nice little house in Garfield Heights some relatives would let them rent after they were married—and

about a baby.

At first, Robert reveled in "young love... a big girl that would let me jump on her." But, feeling threatened—especially by the thought of Robert leaving her—"Dana would break down and blubber like a three-year-old child... Very quickly she made me feel I would be abandoning her to some terrible fate by leaving her."

Confused and frightened, yet held by what he called "her guilt hooks," Robert told Dana he had to "get away and think." He went to Tom Wilson, his boss at Hi Brows, got a leave of absence, and headed for New York City.

As would happen in the future, seeing a problem escalate into a crisis, Robert opted to deal with it by putting miles between it and himself. "I'm a guy who can't say 'No,'" he explains. "I find it hard to say, 'Back off from me—just back off from me.' I could never do that to this day."

Harvey Kurtzman, creator of *Mad* and initiator of the whole cycle of satire comics and magazines, was then editing an effort for Jim Warren (subsequently publisher of *Eerie*, *Creepy*, etc.) called *Help!*. It depended less on cartoons than on humorously captioned

photos, but Kurtzman nevertheless bought "Fritz Comes on Strong." At first, the soon-to-be originator of "Little Annie Fanny" found it too sexy to print! But, when Robert showed up jobless in New York, the master put the neophyte to work, helping assistant Terry Gilliam (later of Monty Python fame) with *Help!* production chores. He also sent Robert up to sketch Harlem, and to pose for a *Help!* fumetti (as an ill-at-ease partygoer).

Robert, predictably, was intimidated by the big town and by the big-time commercial art world. He didn't see much of Kurtzman, who was "the guy on the go—he'd treat me like a kid. I didn't think I had the skills to get involved in that scene."

The only significant art hookup he made in New York that summer was, oddly, at a quick-draw portrait gallery in Greenwich Village. "It was run by a sleazy joker who also had one in Atlantic City." The idea was to haul in tourists off the street and sketch them, "\$2.50 for a five-minute profile, \$5 for full face; charcoal on gray paper with white highlights... I was fascinated by how it worked, and I said, 'Can I get a job in here?'"

There was an opening at the Atlantic City gallery, and Robert left the hot metropolis and went for it. This was the summer of the Democratic convention, and the Boardwalk was already filling up with visitors with money in their pockets. Robert went to work at once, even though the *alter kocker* who owned the place preferred young girls, regardless of sketching talent. "He'd hire them and be nice to them—give them 'first chair' next to the door. Gradually he'd realize he wasn't getting anywhere with them and he'd start treating them like shit. If you lost favor in Ike's eyes, you got moved to the back. Finally they'd get fed up and leave and he'd hire new ones."

If customers didn't like their portraits, they didn't have to pay ("Old ladies gave us the most trouble"), and Robert had problems at first getting likenesses. Soon, however, as at American Greetings, he found unexpected help and camaraderie from his fellow workers. Besides Ike's girls, they were a raffish lot: "An old, washed-up English artist, who drank—really a good artist... A real sardonic junkie, about 30, who said, 'If I didn't hafta draw 'em, I'd spit on 'em.'" Robert was guided by a young Puerto Rican about his age, "an amazing talent. Perfect likeness in a graceful line came very easy to him."

Ike had an assistant, "this other middle-aged monster named Andy that had a steel plate in his head. He'd sit by the front of the gallery and make lewd comments at every woman that went by on the Boardwalk."

Robert found the fading early-century glitz of 1964 Atlantic City "very rich, with the old elegant hotels, the rolling chairs..." In

the gallery and on the Boardwalk he found himself, for the first time, meeting and talking freely with girls. "Something in my head changed . . . It hit me between the eyes that women were accessible." Dana seemed far away.

As the convention time approached, Robert left the portrait gallery and hooked up with a caricaturist who had wangled a spot inside the hall. During the near-riot over the attempted seating of the Mississippi Freedom Democrats, he watched the cops threaten Norman Mailer, then grab him and haul him out. Later, Robert went up and talked to Mailer, until "this beautiful blonde came up and he quickly ignored me."

The conventioners had bucks and doing \$5 caricatures was much easier than portraits. But Robert's palmy days ended fast. In August he met a girl he felt especially attracted to, "a thoughtful girl with glasses but also physically my type . . . I was walking on the Boardwalk holding hands with her in the moonlight, and then suddenly, completely out of the blue, there was Dana."

"She was leaning on the railing, looking at the ocean. When I saw her I immediately let go of this girl's hand—I was so guilt-ridden—and this girl just walked out of my life. I never saw her again."

A determined Dana simply took him over and hauled him straight back to Cleveland. A few weeks later they were married at Dana's suburban church. Robert's parents were among the uncomfortable guests that evening, and he was reminded of a prediction his father had made. "We used to argue when I was living at home. I'd say, 'I'm never gonna get married,' and he'd say, 'Aah, you'll marry the first one that comes along.' He pegged me for a desperate, pathetic character—and he was right."

Robert felt her family had a hand in pushing the willing Dana into marriage. There was a poignant moment in the Hotel Cleveland, where her parents had rented them a wedding-night suite, when "Dana burst out crying, saying, 'I don't want to be married.' She suddenly realized what she'd done." But this instant of panic passed, and for the next nine years Dana followed Robert everywhere that he couldn't avoid her.

First came Europe. The summer's travels had reignited the old Kerouacian on-the-road wanderlust that Robert had once shared with brother Charles; they'd never taken off on their fantasized cross-country trek, but Robert now had more self-confidence and was rapidly losing his lifelong fear of new people and new situations. "I thought Europe would be better than America. I might even live there."

In September, Robert arranged a free-lance-by-mail setup with American Greetings: They would send him Hi Brow card ideas, he would send them back finished art,

they would send him payments of around \$25 per card—enough, he figured, for a frugal but secure living at the 1964 rate of exchange. As a going-away present, his Hi Brow cronies gave him an enormous, thick, hard-bound book of blank art paper. In the following months it was destined to be filled with the visualized wanderings of another questing '60s rover: Fritz the Cat.

They crossed on a Swedish freighter that took nine days, pursued by storms, to make Le Havre. Dana suffered from seasickness, then from culture shock; first in London, then in Zurich, where she had friends from her years as a camp counselor. But Europe fascinated Robert, particularly Zurich with its "quaintness, smallness of scale . . . Old buildings . . . Trolleys from 1910, absolutely pristine condition." The Crumbs' hosts were a traditional Swiss family who dressed for dinner and gave a little musical recital afterwards. They treated Robert and Dana to a day in the mountains, with Lederhosen, chalet, hot chocolate, and accordion music.

Deciding to spend the winter in Switzerland, they heard about a cheap guesthouse in Locarno, and Robert took off alone to check it out, riding across the Alps, down serpentine mountain roads, and through fairytale villages behind an insane Italian motorcyclist. Frau Etter, the Crumbs' landlady for the next several months, was an old alcoholic Bohemian who had been all over Europe in the 1920s and '30s, until the Nazis killed her husband, a hero of the Danish resistance. In the hills above lived her friend Swerzmann, an ancient sculptor with fierce blue eyes blazing out from under his ever-present broad-brimmed hat, and over his flowing white whiskers. Swerzmann was a Communist and the front yard of his hut had

an enormous forearm and clenched fist coming out of the ground. His place was filled with naive-surreal, cartoonlike objects he'd carved, like a tank in the form of a German helmet with a skull sticking out of the turret. Robert was captivated by these strange creations, and Swerzmann, who spoke no English, liked Robert's sketchbooks. "He was 90-something."

Locarno was filled with "rich people, artists, and old guys wearing berets" who mostly sat around the cafes. Robert couldn't make connection with them and spent the winter *chez Etter*, drawing in "the big book." Newly married, in a strange land thousands of miles from America, he collated the confusion of inspirations and images that both attracted and repelled him about his native country, its inhabitants, and himself: the beatniks and bourgeois, folkers and rockers, blacks and radicals, poets and potheads. He conjured the lure of The Road, big fast cars, hitchhiking, bumming the railroads, crashing parties; even the understated narrow-tie cool of the JFK/LBJ-era government secret agents of paperback and television glory.

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But Robert's own satirical claws were out for Fritz. The cat was a poseur: as struggling student, sensitive *artiste*, self-assured cocksman, stemwinder salesman, even CIA operative supreme. His posturing was taken seriously by others because, first of all, Fritz took it seriously himself. However, Robert saw to it that this egotistic role-playing kept Fritz in hot water. Barrels of it. In "Fritz Bugs Out," "Special Agent for the CIA," and the slightly later college student story, Fritz runs away with the show. One day, Robert would make sure that the upstaging feline got his.

Robert's drawing technique was rolling



W. SWERZMANN
The artist as an
old man



ahead at the same time, as fast as one of Fritz's stolen cars. For years he had stuck with using ordinary lead pencil, being intimidated by brushes and croquille pens. But now a Rapidograph mechanical fountain drawing pen, which he mastered at American Greetings, accompanied him everywhere. The rigid point gave him the thin, flowing line seen in "Fritz" and his other 1964-1966 work, and also inspired the heavy—almost obsessive—parallel vertical shading lines. "It was a gimmick," Robert admits, "and it really looks stupid to me now. It made the whole shading thing seem very simple: rather than having to do crosshatching." The verticals could be drawn in almost like applying a mechanical gray, such as Zip-a-tone. Used sparingly, this could be effective, even charming; but it could also make roads and other dark surfaces look wet, distort textures, and confuse backgrounds and foregrounds.

"Shading took me years to get down the

way I wanted," says Robert. "During the hippie era, when I had that kind of revivalist big-foot style, shading became very minimal. Then, when I started to come out of that, I once again got very interested in Thomas Nast." Robert considers Nast, the seminal 19th-Century political cartoonist and originator of the Democratic donkey, Republican elephant, and modern Santa Claus, as the all-time master of crosshatching. "In the mid-'70s I tried really hard to learn that. I actually think I got pretty good at it by 1980."

At some point during this isolated but busy winter, a letter arrived from Harvey Kurtzman with an intriguing assignment. Somewhere he'd heard Bulgaria described as "just like 1984," and he thought, since Robert was in the neighborhood (approximately), he could just pop over and sketch the horrors of Communism as he'd handled Harlem the previous summer. By now Robert was feeling housebound and ready for a new adventure, so he and Dana made quits with Frau

Eiter and headed for Milano, where they caught the Orient Express.

They shared most of the trip with a third-class carful of Turkish emigrant workers, celebrating as they returned home, their pockets full of Deutschmarks. When the engine crossed into Yugoslavia, time began to turn backward, and as they detrained at Sofia they seemed to be in a 19th-Century Dostoevski novel. "It was so funky. There were no signs of wealth—there never had been any money there." Nor were there tourists, or, to Dana's horror, many English-speakers.

"I liked the way it was there a lot," says Robert. "It was really appealing." He was eager to explore the snowy streets on foot, but Dana just wanted to stay in the hotel room. Robert remembers the big drinking halls ("everywhere the reek of garlic"), and a ballroom orchestra ("straight out of the 1920s") playing Straussian light classics in the pre-war salon manner. At one point, the

through there," Robert claims, on the way up or way down. When Robert's cards were printed, a close look at three or four of them revealed that "somebody had actually very carefully redrawn some of the cards—maintaining my style, but making everything tighter and neater-looking."

Topps' art department was located in their ancient factory on Brooklyn's waterfront, and for a couple months Robert joined the rush-hour crowds on the Lexington Avenue subway to hack out the cards ("the backs of the cards had live models in monster makeup with the punch lines") and a salesman's incentive book (using his sappiest greeting-card style). "The whole neighborhood smelled like Bazooka bubble gum. I remember watching them make it, eating fresh gum right out of the vat. It was good!"

Working here, however, was less than every kid's dream. "The art department was a bleak factory room covered with a century of soot that they put some shoddy broken-down art tables in. The little staff of beaten-dog permanent artists were like a bunch of refugees from Auschwitz... So depressed... Mostly Jewish... They'd punch a time clock, like the 1930s... Creaky stairs... I betcha anything it's still there, still the same."

Gelman himself had several projects going on the side, mainly publishing a series of books under the Nostalgia Enterprises logo. There were several reprints of early comic strips, of which Gelman was an enthusiast and collector. (His death in the 1970s unfortunately brought his many plans to a premature halt, before today's wider market for his material had developed.) "The Small Small Businessmen" was part of one of these unrealized ideas. It's a thoroughly-researched and beautifully-evoked picture of a Depression-era New York neighborhood, using a non-humorous illustrational technique then rare for Robert, but which he developed much more fully in the 1980s. But he hated doing the work and insists, "I'm not very proud of it now." At the New York Public Library he spent hours, for "a pittance," researching Gelman projects (i.e., the Harry Thaw murder case), cranking microfilms in darkened stalls until he grew nauseous and half-blind.

"I was getting the impression very quick in New York that you could work like a dog, but if you didn't get out of this low level, you could live in some shithole of a place and just work your ass off." The precise, technical expertise of the "beaten dogs" at Topps was "demanding, way over what I thought I was capable of handling. I just didn't have the tight finished professional approach. I felt very inadequate about it."

The longer Robert worked in New York, and the more LSD he took, the more he saw commercial art as a treadmill to nowhere, walked hopelessly by files of despairingly



broken dreamers. "Before, I still had a dream you could be a comic artist with some promise held out. But I didn't want a house in Scarsdale... Topps was the bottom."

Nevertheless, on his own time, at the Yorkville apartment, and then in the East Village ("Paradise Alley," East 11th Street and Avenue A), where he and Dana moved in late 1965, Robert continued to draw his own comics. He began thinking of seriously trying to sell them for publication—somewhere: The new Fritz story was drawn more professionally on separate sheets of Strathmore paper. (Eventually it appeared in *Head Comix*.) This was part of an abortive pre-underground comic book idea. The cover (*Fug #1*) is published here for the first time. The "Roberta" page was a brief attempt at developing a relatively conventional character he'd created for American Greeting's newssheet.

In the East Village he bought the local hip paper, the *East Village Other*, and got a charge out of Bill Beckman's *Captain High*, "the first underground or hippie-type comic strip I ever saw." The significance should be obvious.

He broke into *EVO* himself in a roundabout way. "I'd taken some fashion ads from the newspaper and redrawn over them and filled out the women's figures. They were laying around Liz Johnston's house and somehow they ended up in the *EVO*."

It was really beginning to look like the '60s. There were go-go joints, "in" bars and coffee houses; the Peace Eye Bookstore had started; MacDougall Street was overrun with Jewish girls from Long Island in peacoats and Bob Dylan caps. "I used to go down to the Village and hang around these coffee houses like the Figaro, but I just couldn't connect with girls. I didn't care about any of the rest of it, but there were all these girls, girls, GIRLS!"

Besides Liz and Buzzy, other Cleveland-

ers had come East to latch onto the burgeoning scene—including Bobbie. The old affair flared up again, but "Dana just smelled me and knew right away I'd had sex with another woman."

One thing they did share, along with most of their friends, was drugs. Dana had talked her way into a job in the pharmacy of Roosevelt Hospital, where everyone from doctors down "jut scooped up big handfuls of methadone tablets out of big barrels, and gave it to friends." They would drop meth or acid and sit up all night talking.

It was one of these sessions that involved the famous "fuzzy acid," which was to produce the most significant high of Robert's tenure in LSD Land. He thinks Buzzy laid it on him, then called a couple days later and said it was no good, something was wrong with it, don't take it. Dana heeded the warning, but Robert swallowed it anyway.

That night, as his high peaked, he came to a decision. "I said, 'It's now or never. I'm going to tell her, 'This is it. I'm leaving.''" She freaked out. She went in the bathroom and threatened suicide. Finally, she came out, pushed me down on the couch and sat on me, and told me I wasn't going anywhere.

"I said, 'Well, you hafta get up sooner or later, y'know?'"

Dana finally agreed to go back to Cleveland. But she insisted on fixing them one last meal. "She had this chicken soup left over, and it was real bitter tasting. I spit it out and I said, 'What did you put in this soup?' I got really mad at her and intimidated her, and she admitted she put thirty sleeping pills in the chicken soup."

"She packed up her stuff and put the two cats in a carrying case, and I put her on the plane to Cleveland that day."

The next three weeks Robert describes as "confused, lost, and miserable." He was free of Dana but burdened with guilt over her. "I kept having dreams about Dana, seeing her weeping face in my dreams."

It was a dreary January. After-effects of the "fuzzy LSD" remained, disorienting him, but inspiring a strange progression of drawings in his sketchbook. Robert grew antsy to split.

One night he took acid with Bobbie. "I left her house at dawn. When I got to the subway, I was still high on LSD. People were crowded around the entrance and they were all peering down the stairs. I looked down and there was a girl's body lying at the bottom of the stairs, sprawled out, and police examining her. Evidently she was dead."

"That was like a sign to me that I had to get out of New York."

Robert left New York with a head full of guilt and acid fuzz, and under his arm a sketchbook that would one day spin many heads: not just new comics, but an entirely new kind of comics—or comix.

Fritz the Cat, Ace Salesman



by
R. CRUMB



NOW, THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A MINUTE, MADAM! THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY... THIS IS NO EVERY DAY ORDINARY SALES PITCH I'M GIVING YOU!



WHILE YOU'RE THINKING, LET ME TELL YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT "GOD INCORPORATED".



NOW YOU KNOW THAT IN THIS DAY AND AGE WHEN WE'RE ALL SO CAUGHT UP IN THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF THE MODERN SCHEME OF HURRY HURRY HURRY THAT, WELL... MOST OF US FORGET TO TAKE TIME OUT NOW AND THEN...



...BUT IT THE TRUTH!

YOU KNOW THIS YOURSELF, I'M SURE, MADAM... DON'T YOU SOMETIMES FIND THAT YOU'VE JUST COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOUR DUTIES TO THAT GOOD OLD LITTLE GUY UP THERE... HMMM?



WELL, HE HASN'T FORGOTTEN ABOUT YOU!



SO, THE PEOPLE AT "GOD INCORPORATED" CAME UP WITH A WONDERFUL IDEA TO SAVE YOU TIME AND KEEP THE MAN UPSTAIRS HAPPY TOO!



IT'S A NEW MIRACLE OF AUTOMATION! A WONDERFUL DEVICE WHICH COMBINES THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES WITH THE FINEST KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEN OF FAITH!



....NEW EASY-TO-USE "SANCT-O-SPRAY"!



YOU JUST PUSH THIS LITTLE BUTTON...IT'S AS EASY AS THAT, AND-WOOSH!- YOUR HOUSE IS AS HOLY AS A CHURCH!



YOU CAN FEEL THE DIFFERENCE
ALREADY, CAN'T YOU, MADAM?
NOW, OUR NEW INTRODUCTORY
OFFER WILL MEAN BIG SAVINGS
FOR YOU!



WE'LL GIVE YOU... UH..
WE'LL ... UH....

WHAT'S....



NATALIE!



NATALIE! DON'T BE SO
RUDE! TURN OFF THAT
TV AND GET OUT OF THE
LIVING ROOM!



GO ON! GET OUT! CAN'T
YOU SEE I'M TALKING
TO THIS MAN?

OW!



WAAH!
WAAH!
WAAH!



THAT NATALIE...HEH
HEH...SOMETIMES SHE'S
JES' A PAIN! A REAL
PAIN...



YOUR DAUGHTER,
TAKE IT?

UH..YEAH...
THAT NATALIE!
SHE'S A REAL
PAIN SOME
TIMES!



MADAM, NOW THAT I'VE
SHOWN YOU WHAT SANCTO-
SPRAY CAN DO, HAVE YOU
ANY DOUBTS ABOUT ITS
HOLY PURIFYING POWERS?





FRITZ THE CAT *in*
"FRITZ COMES ON STRONG"

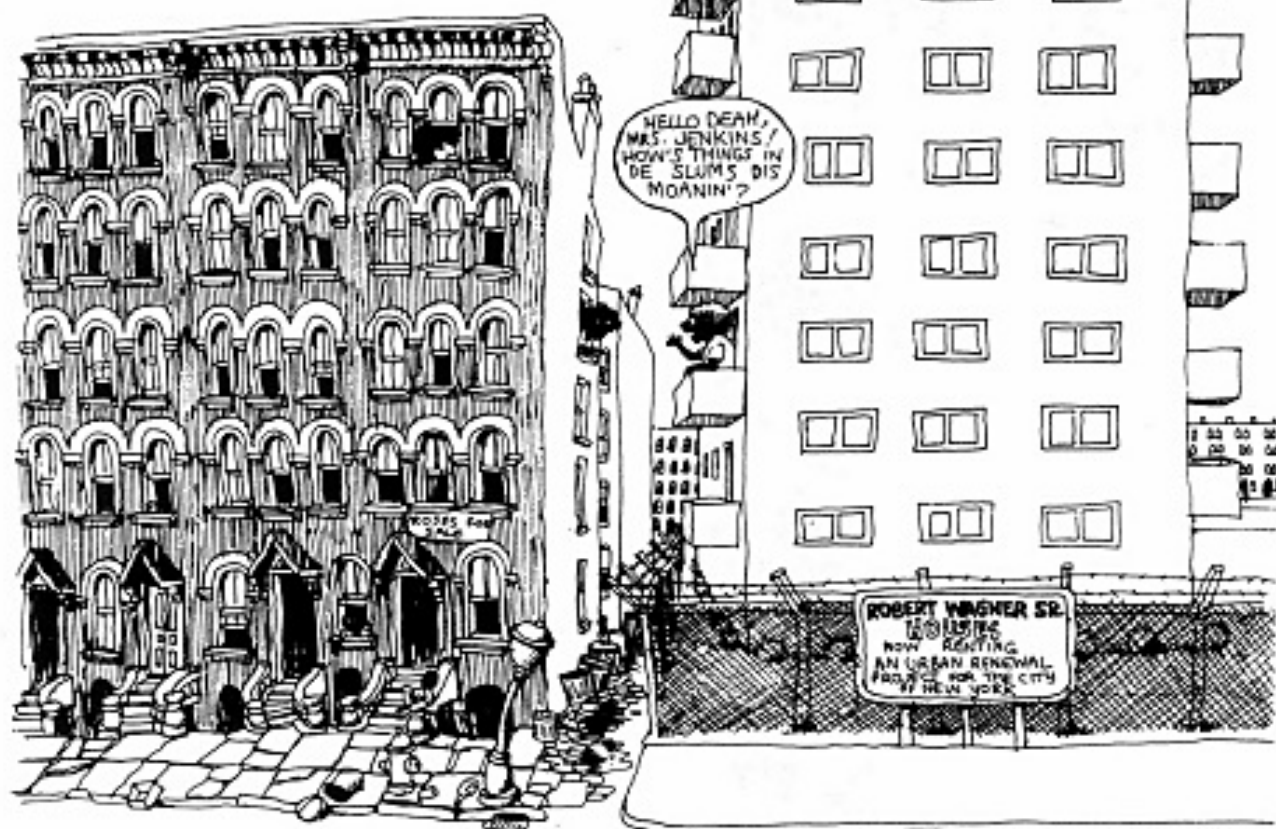




HARLEM









A FEW OF THE GANGS OF HARLEM

THE
"VIPES"
ARE A
MEAN
BUNCH



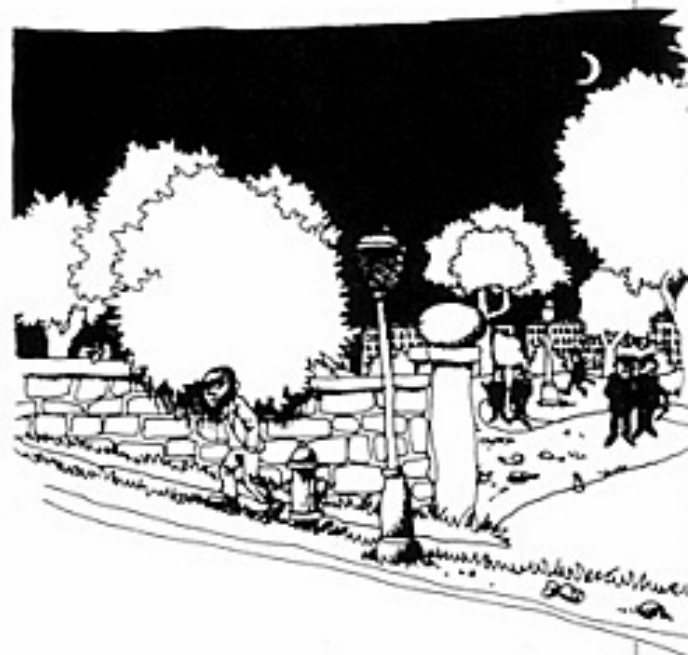
THE
"SPORTSMEN"
ARE SHARP DRESSERS



"THE
DISCIPLES"
ARE FAR-OUT
-WEIRDS



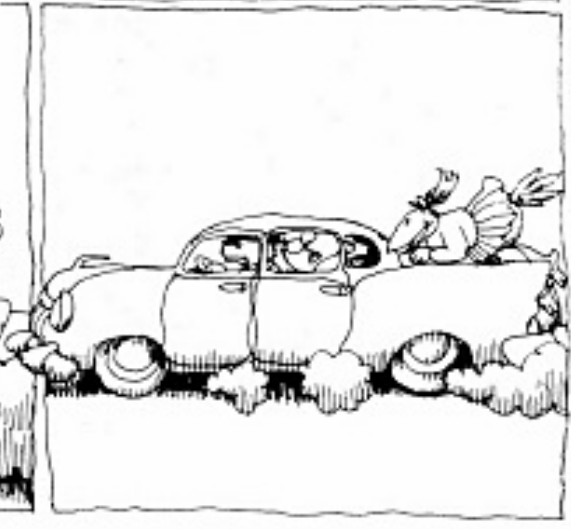
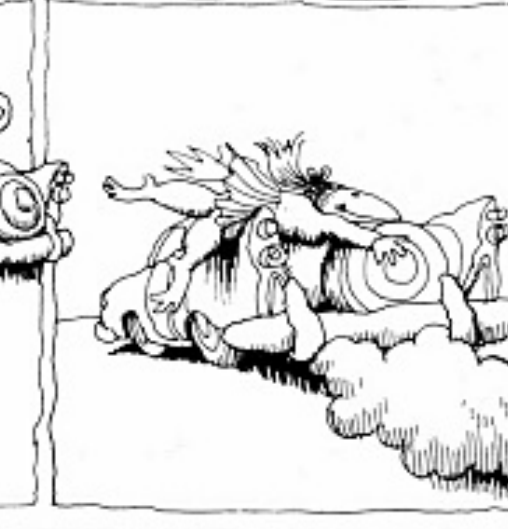
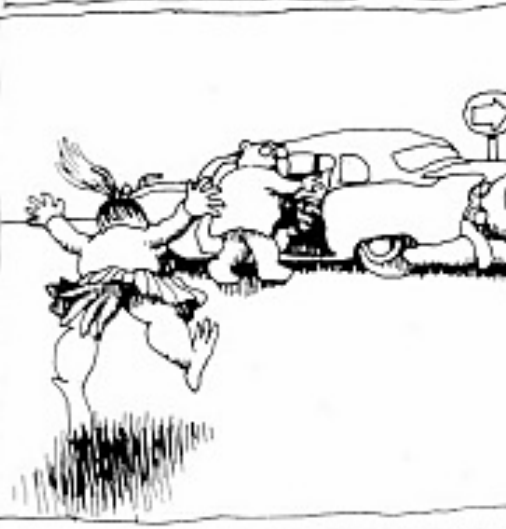
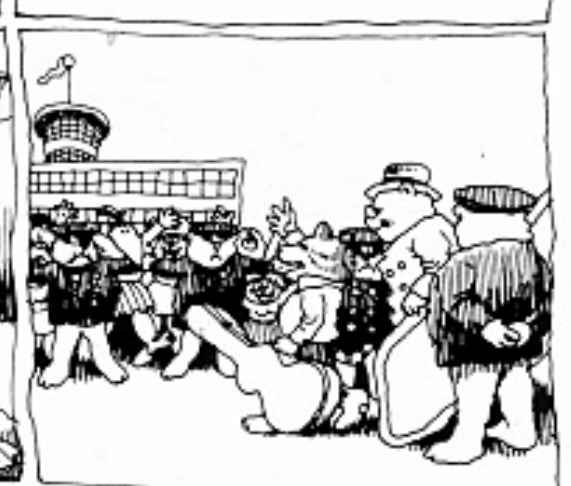
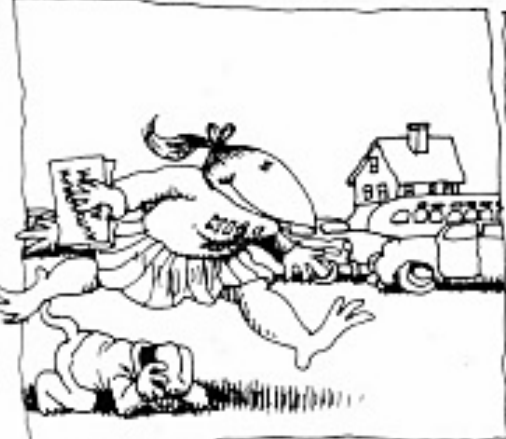
THE
"UNTOUCHABLES"
... ONLY THEIR
HAIRDRESSER
KNOWS FOR
SURE ...

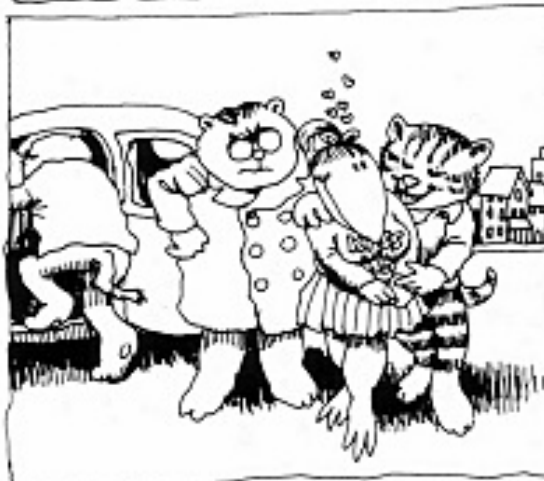
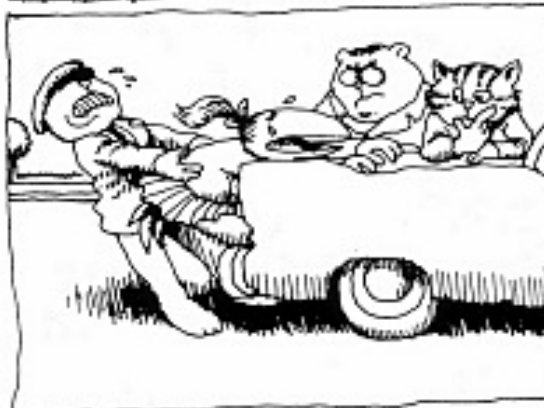
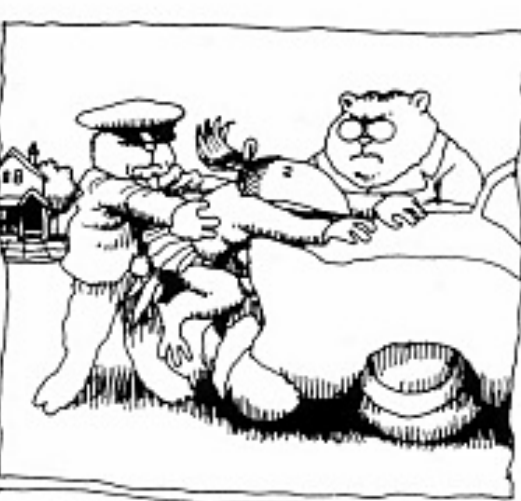
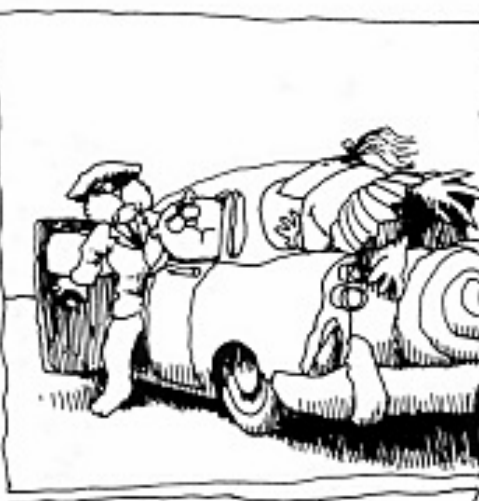






fred the teen-age girl pigeon















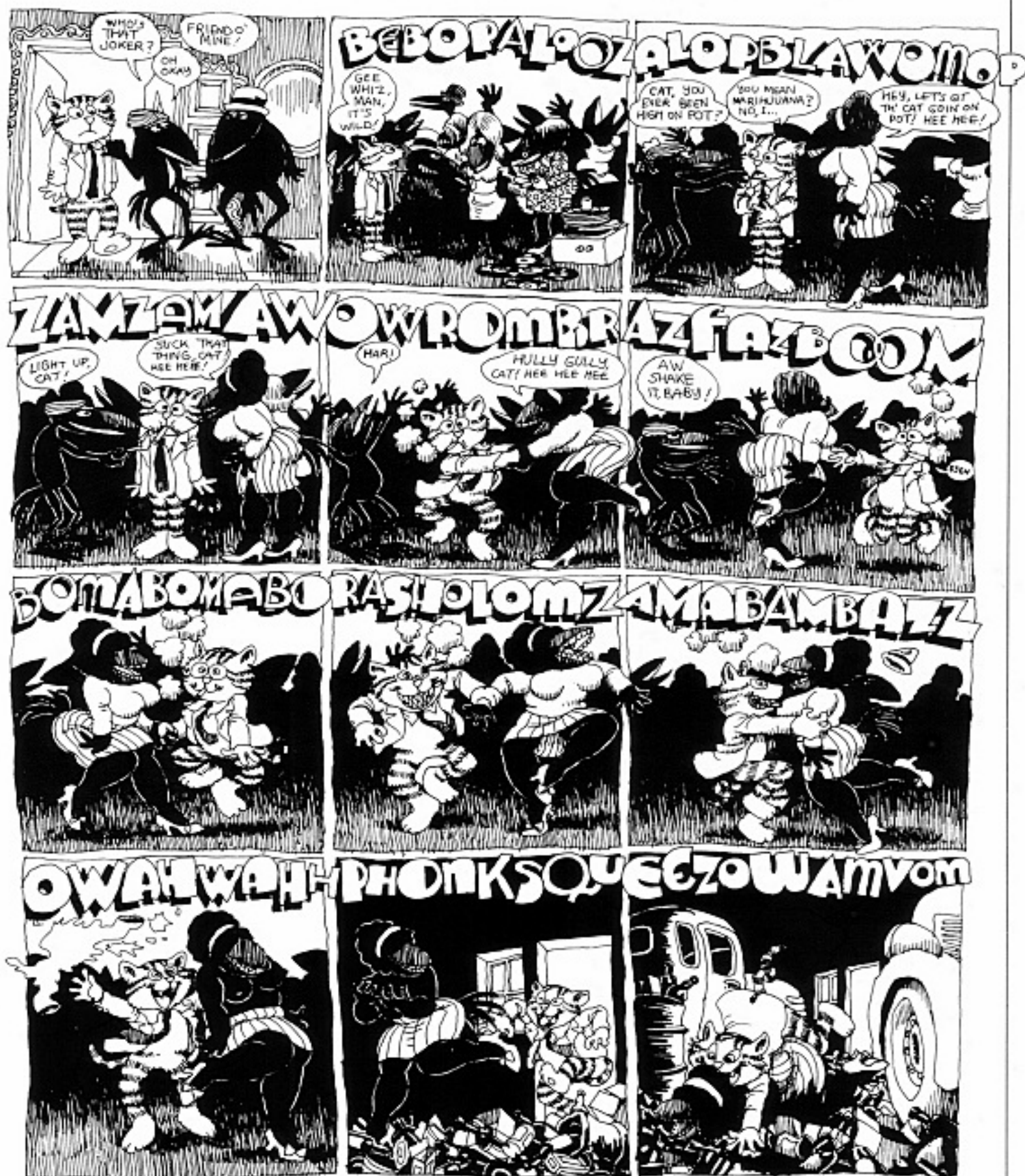














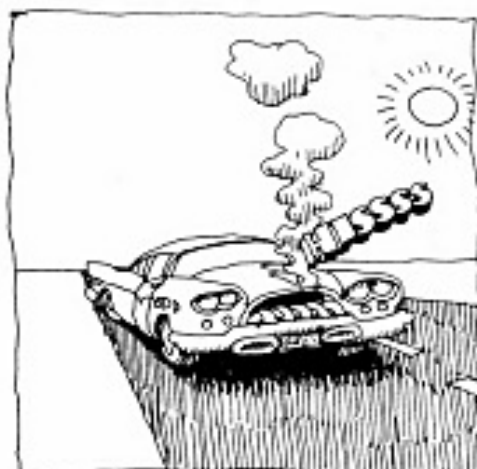


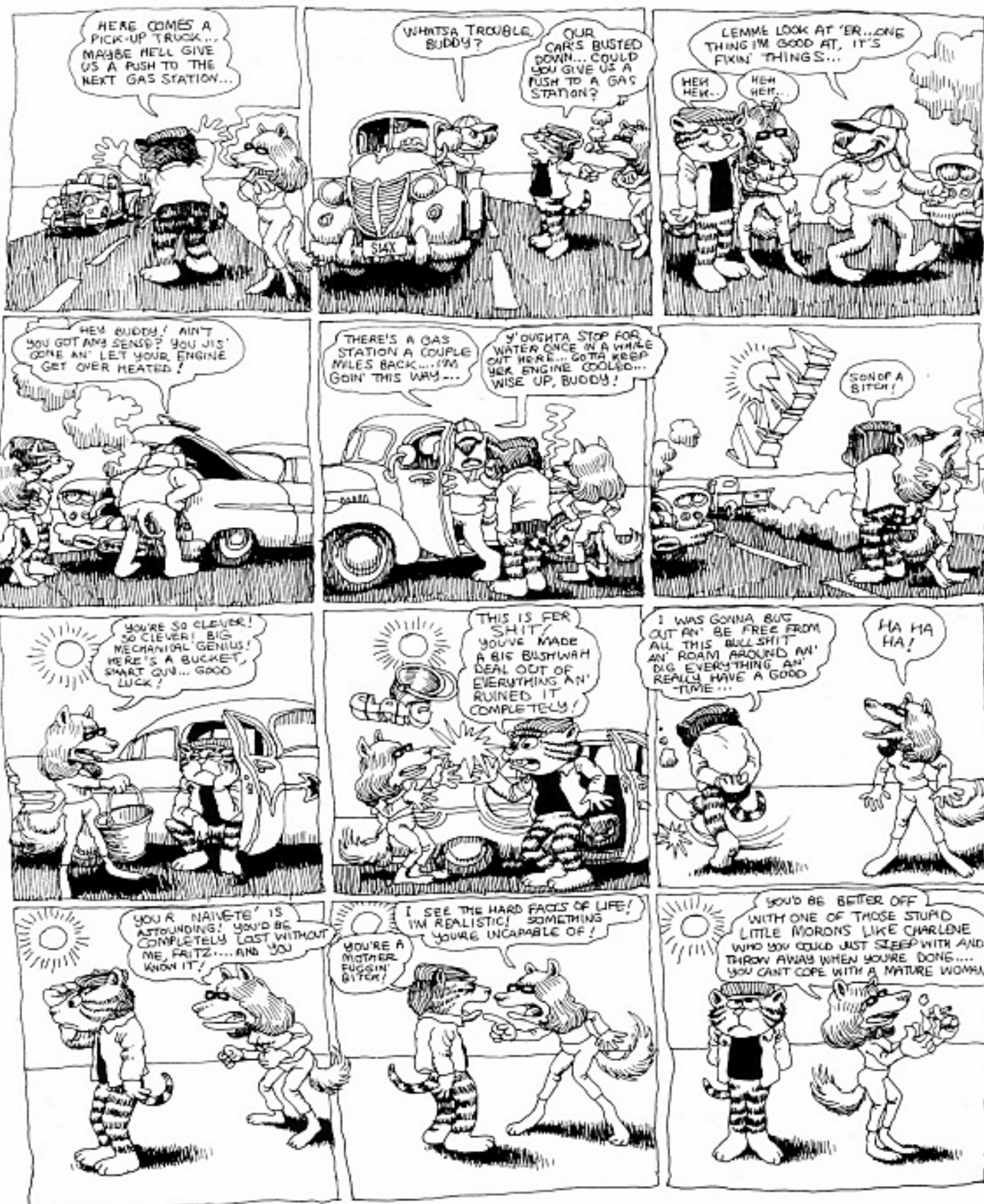


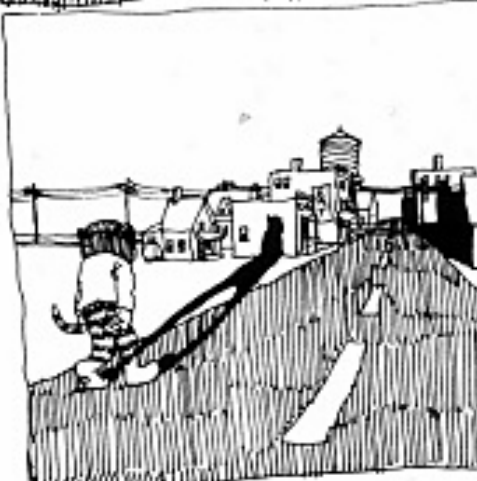








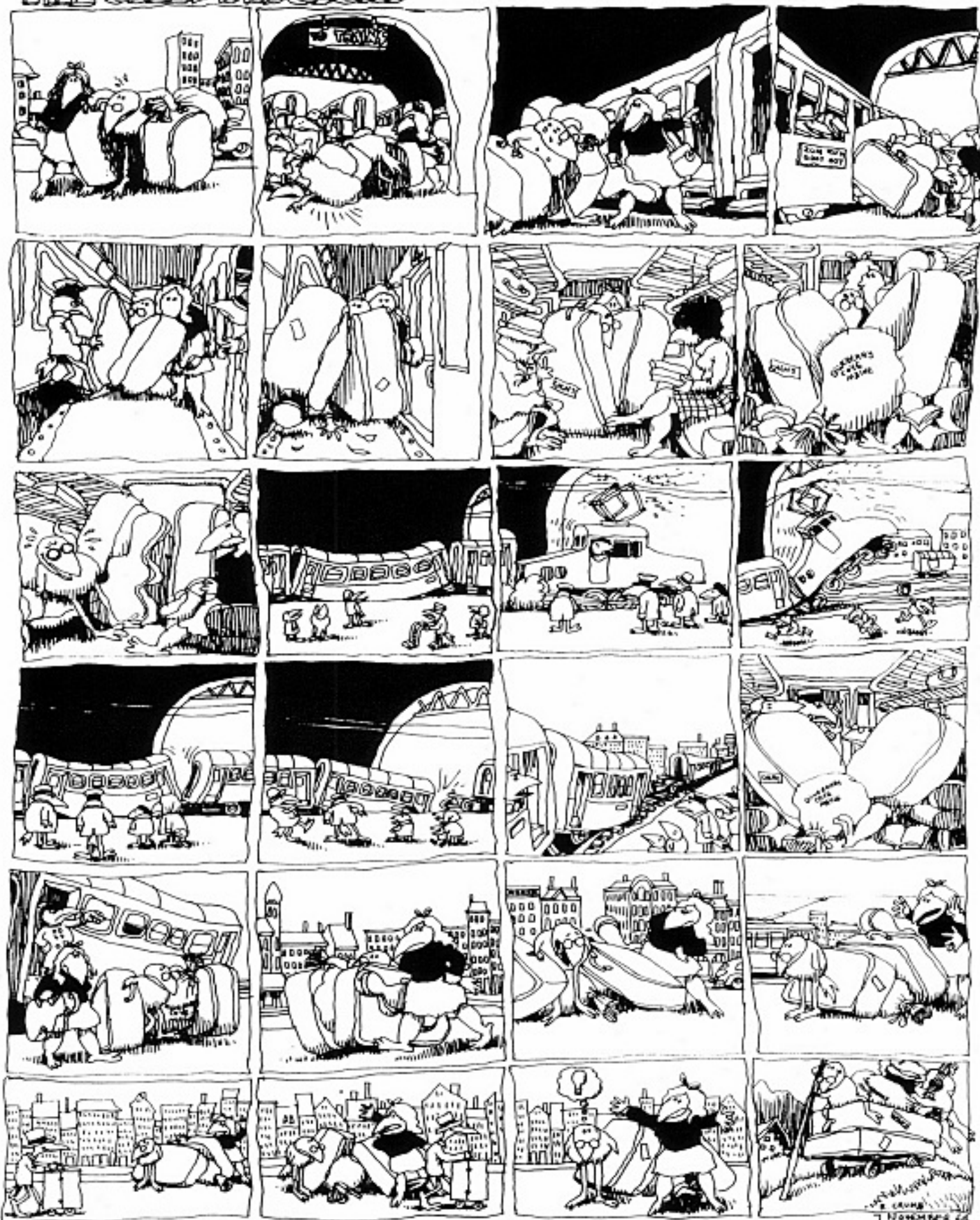




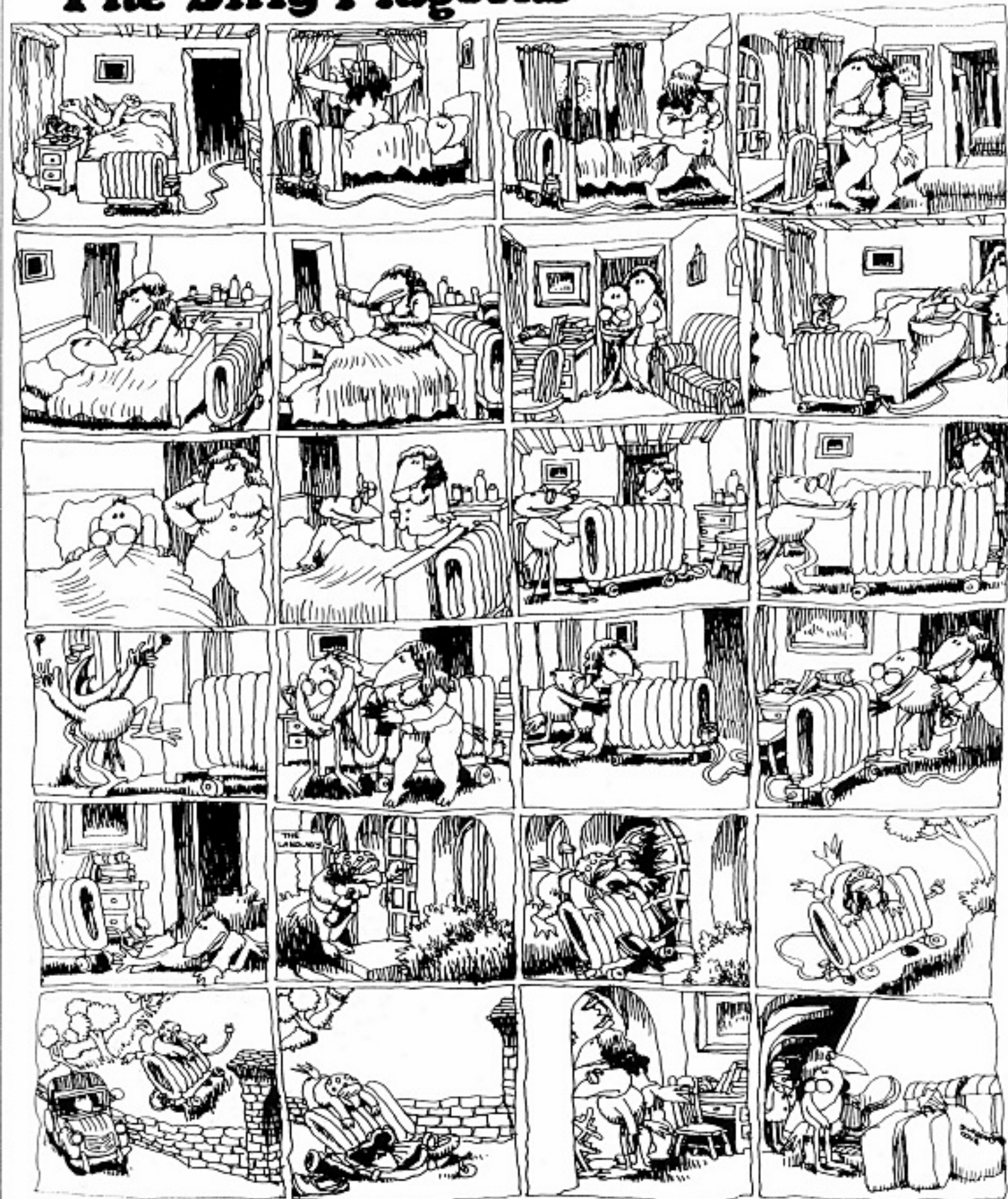




THE SILLY PIGEONS

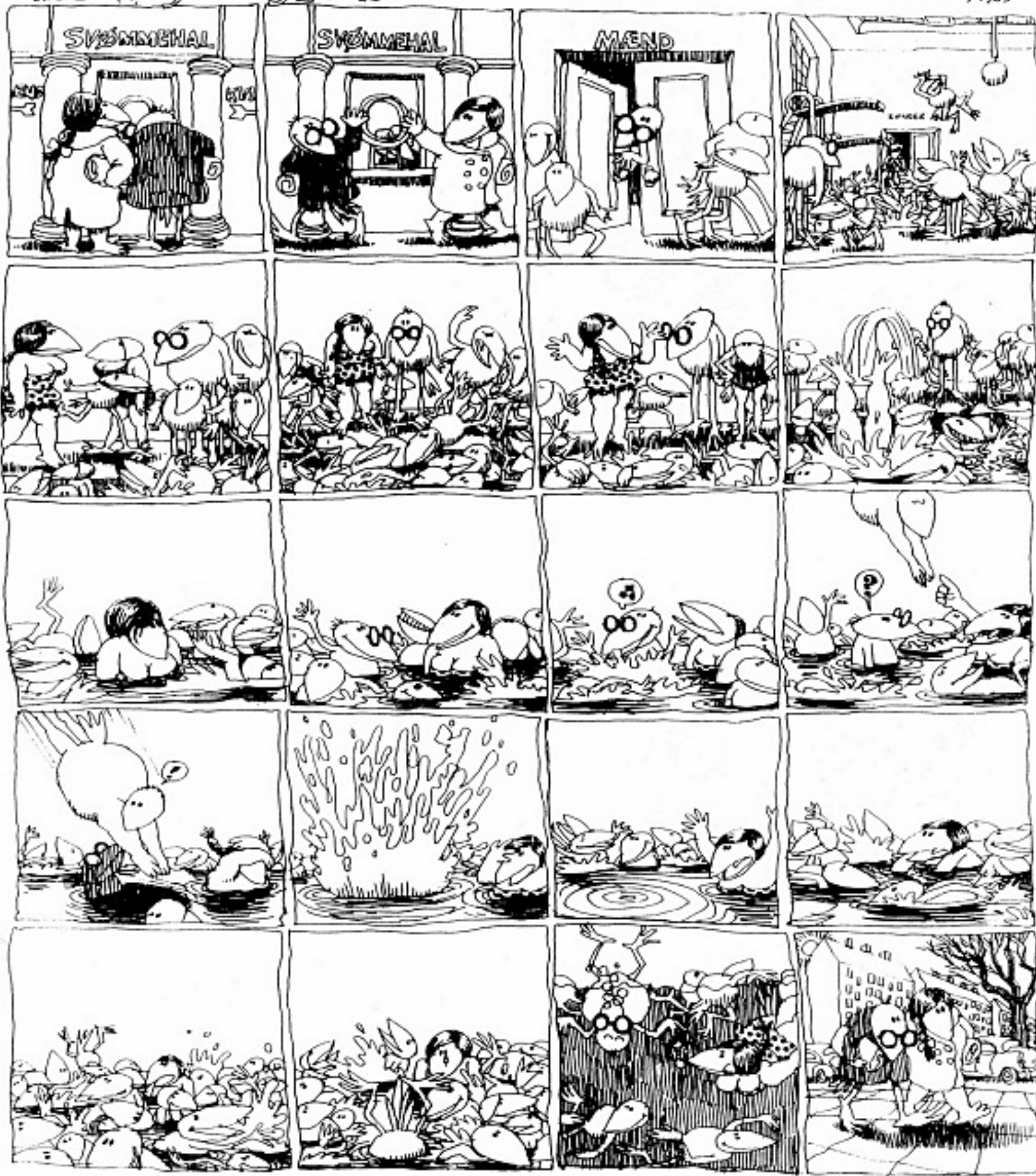


The Silly Pidgeons



The Silly Pidgeons

MARCH 12, 1965



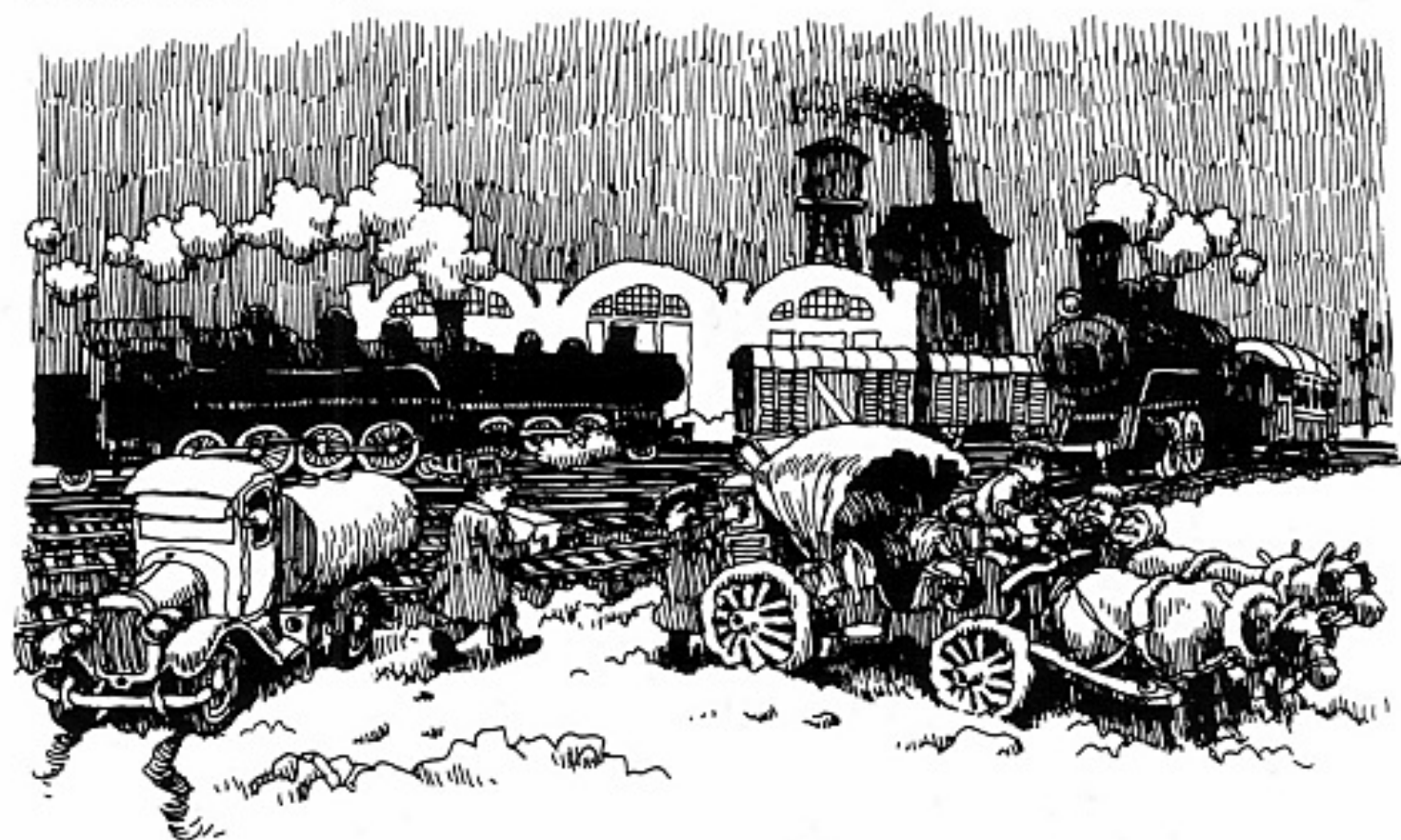
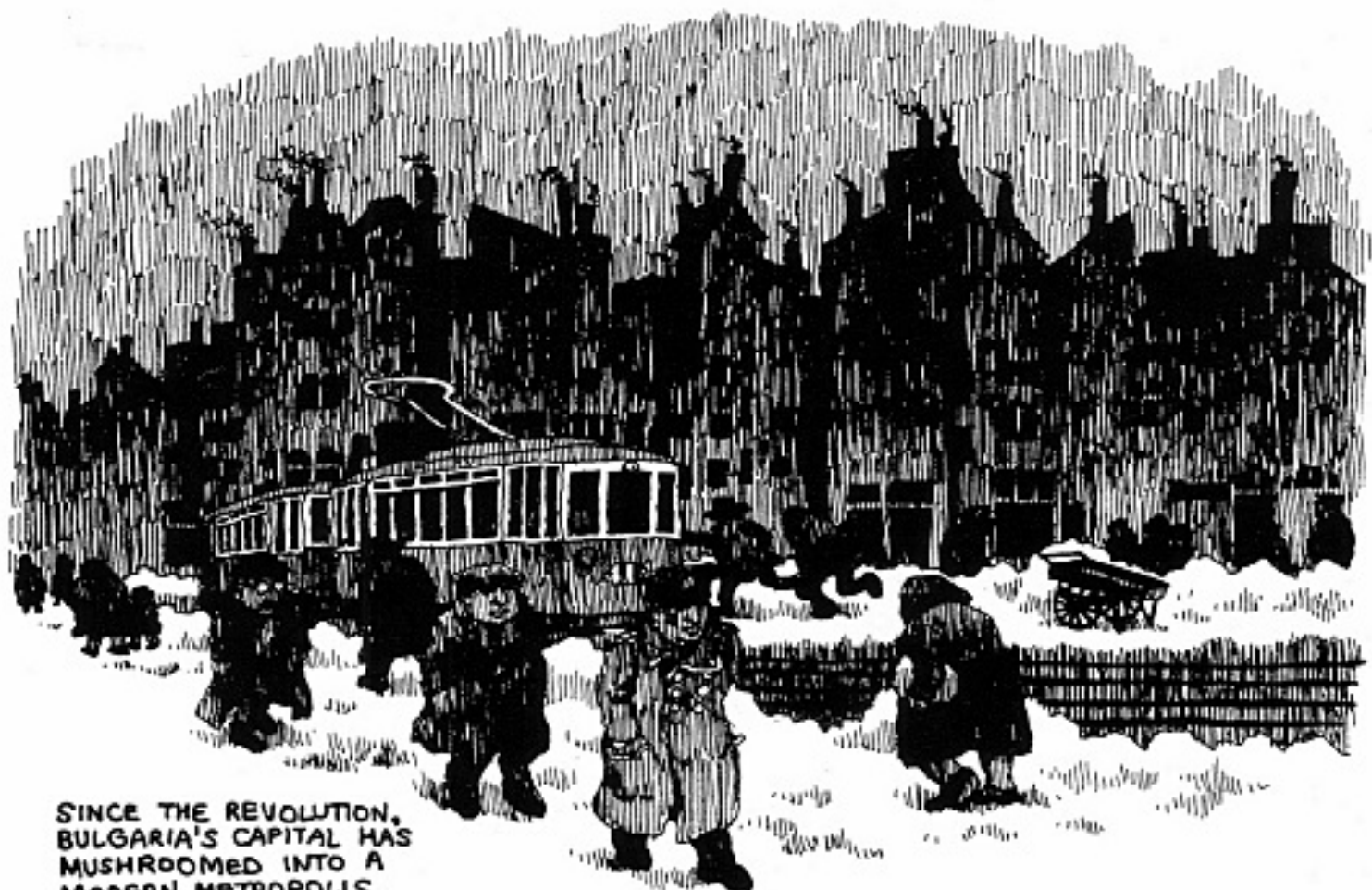
BULGARIA



COMMUNIST PARTY
HEADQUARTERS IN SOFIA,
CAPITAL OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA



ARRIVED IN SOFIA IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT... GETTING A TAXI WAS A REAL BITCH....



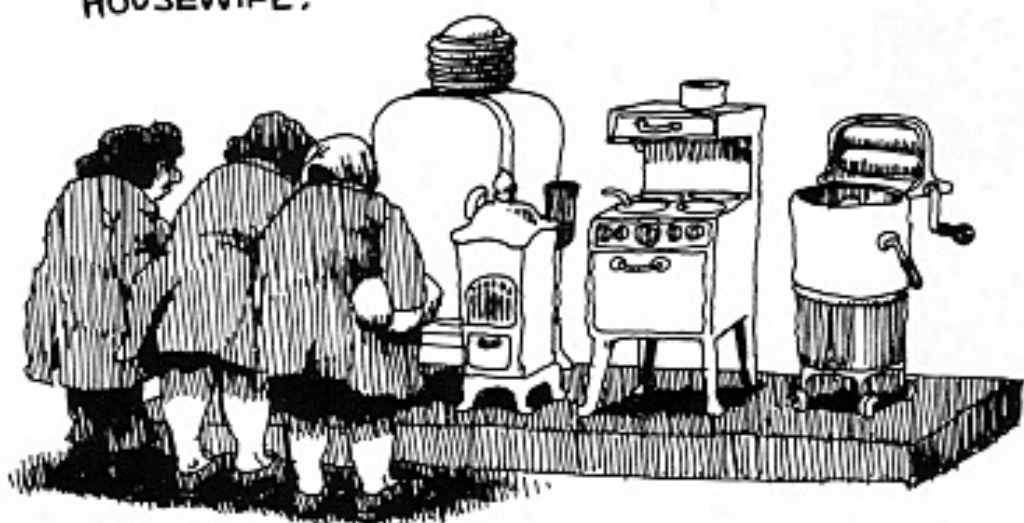


THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC IS FREE FROM DECADENT WESTERN "MOMISM."

FACTORY WORKERS ARE MORE
PRODUCTIVE IN COLORFUL, INSPIRING
SURROUNDINGS.



A WIDE VARIETY OF
HOME APPLIANCES
HAVE BEEN MADE
AVAILABLE TO THE
BULGARIAN
HOUSEWIFE.



ЛВЛЗ
СТОТИНКИ
ЩОФЗ



SMALL
VESTIGES OF
FREE ENTERPRISE
STILL EXIST.

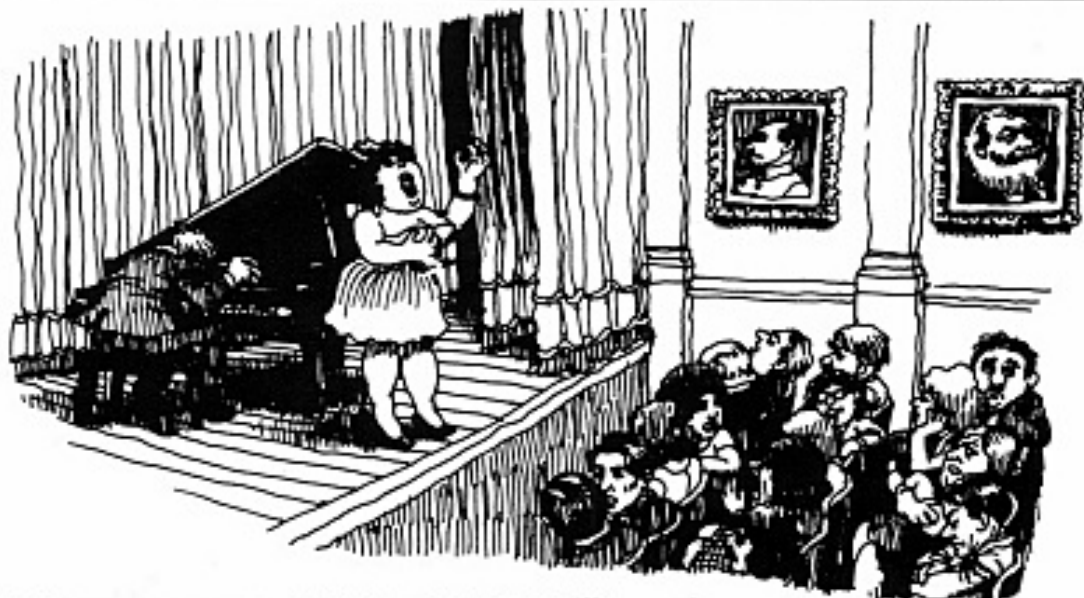
THE PEOPLE
NOW HAVE
BUYING-POWER,
BUT IT'S ALL
ON A "CASH-AND-
CARRY" BASIS.



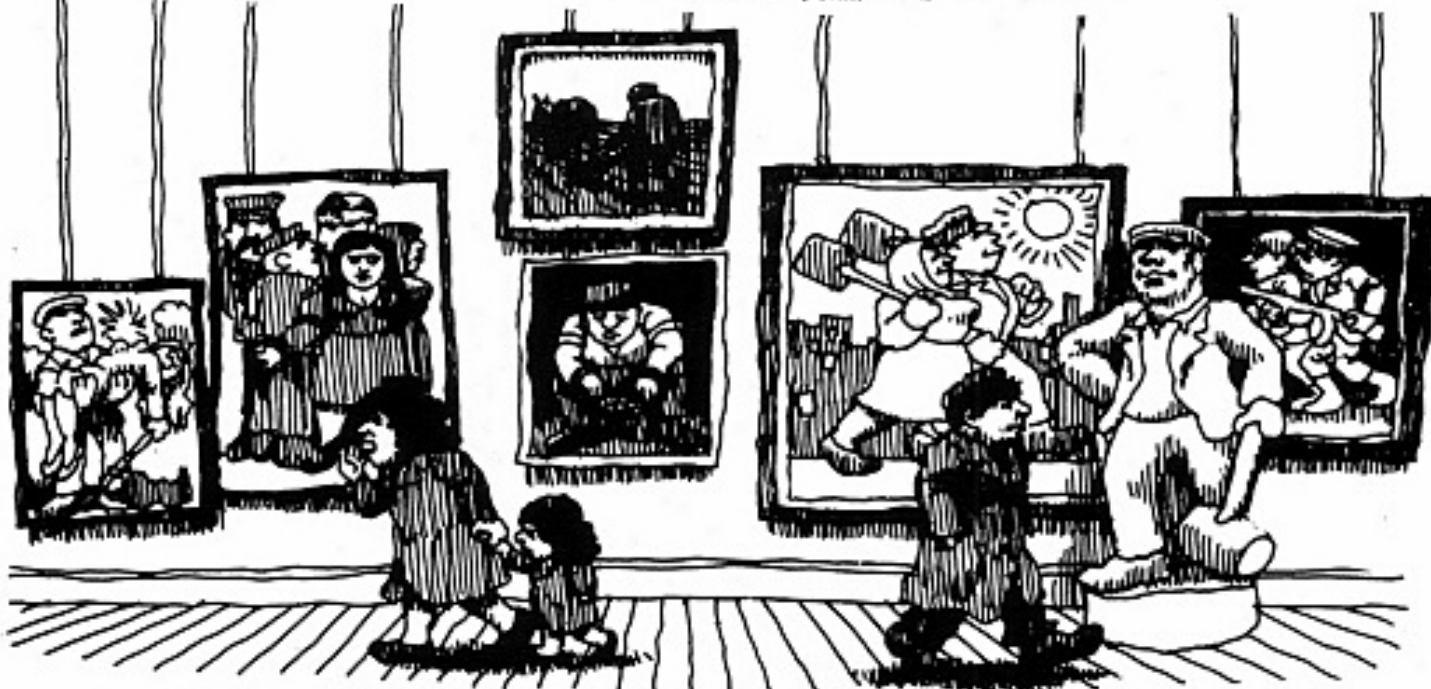
RUSSIA SENDS FARM MACHINERY TO BULGARIA IN EXCHANGE FOR MUCH-NEEDED
WHEAT AND OTHER CROPS.

CULTURE IN BULGARIA

MUCH OF THE CULTURE
OF THE NEW PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC IS IMPORTED
FROM THE U.S.S.R.



STATE PUBLISHING
HOUSES PROVIDE
HUNDREDS OF NEW
BOOKS EVERY
YEAR FOR THE
ENLIGHTENMENT
OF THE MASSES.



THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART IS FILLED WITH INSPIRING WORKS THAT ARE EASILY
UNDERSTOOD BY THE AVERAGE MAN. DEGENERATE "ABSTRACT" ART IS NOT PERMITTED.

NEW BALLET
DEPICTS STRUGGLES
OF THE WORKING
CLASS.



THEY WOULD LIKE
TO DO THE TWIST
BUT IT'S AGAINST
THE LAW.

ANYWAY, SOME WESTERN
INFLUENCES DO
SEEP IN....



R. CRUMB



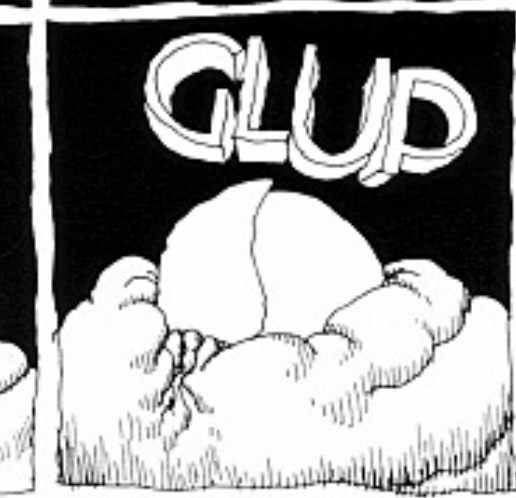




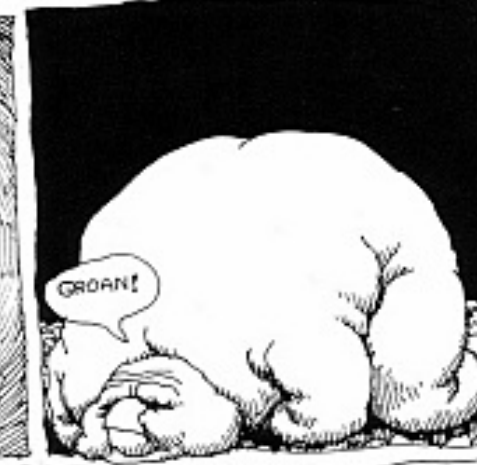






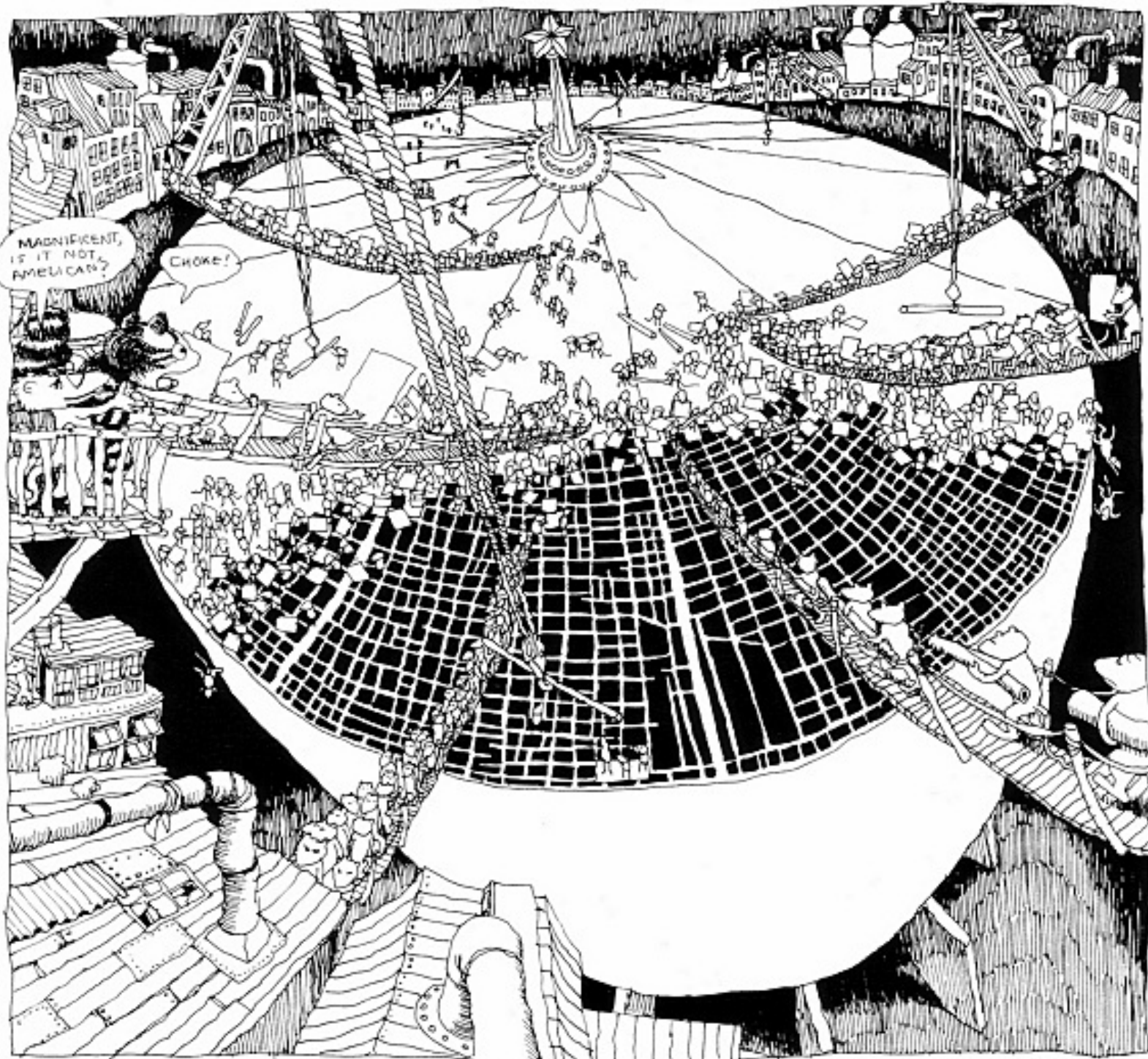




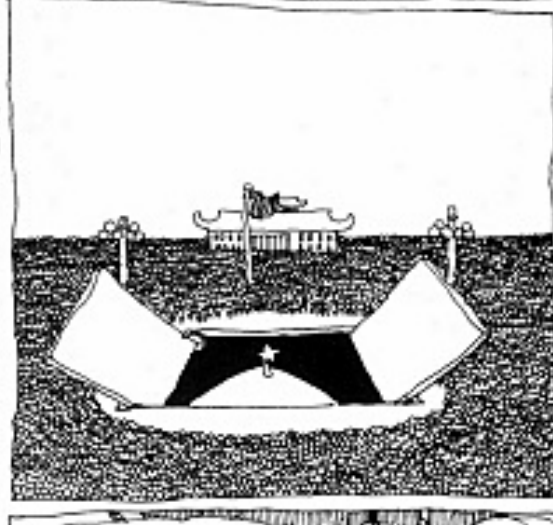








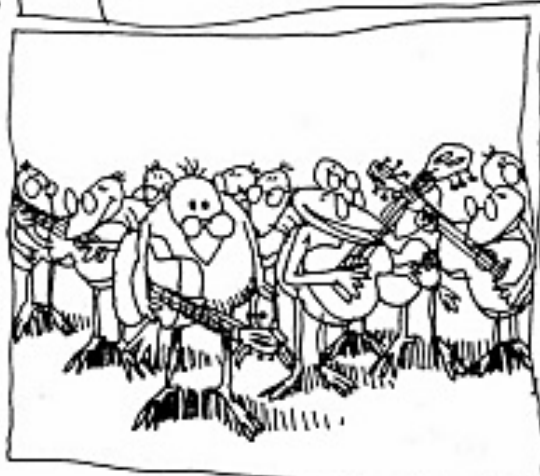
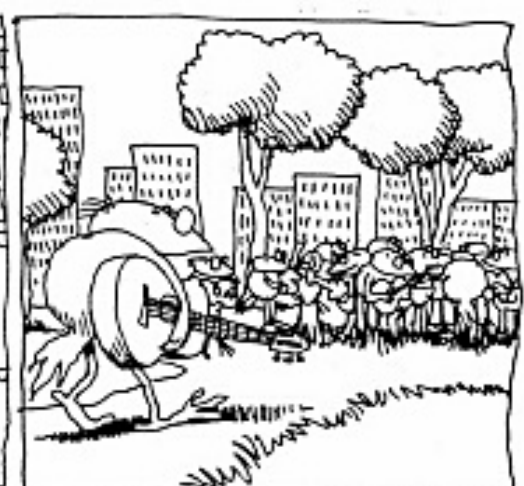
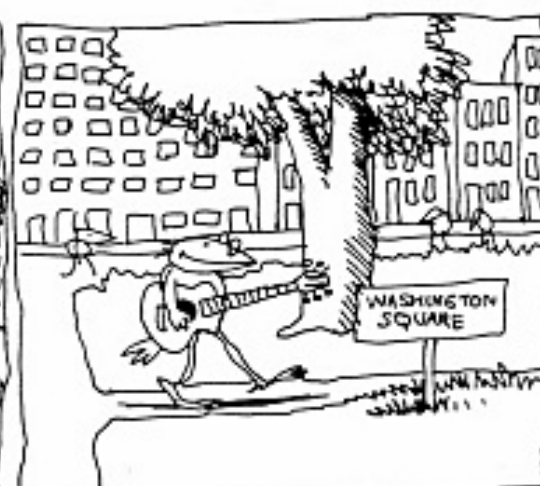




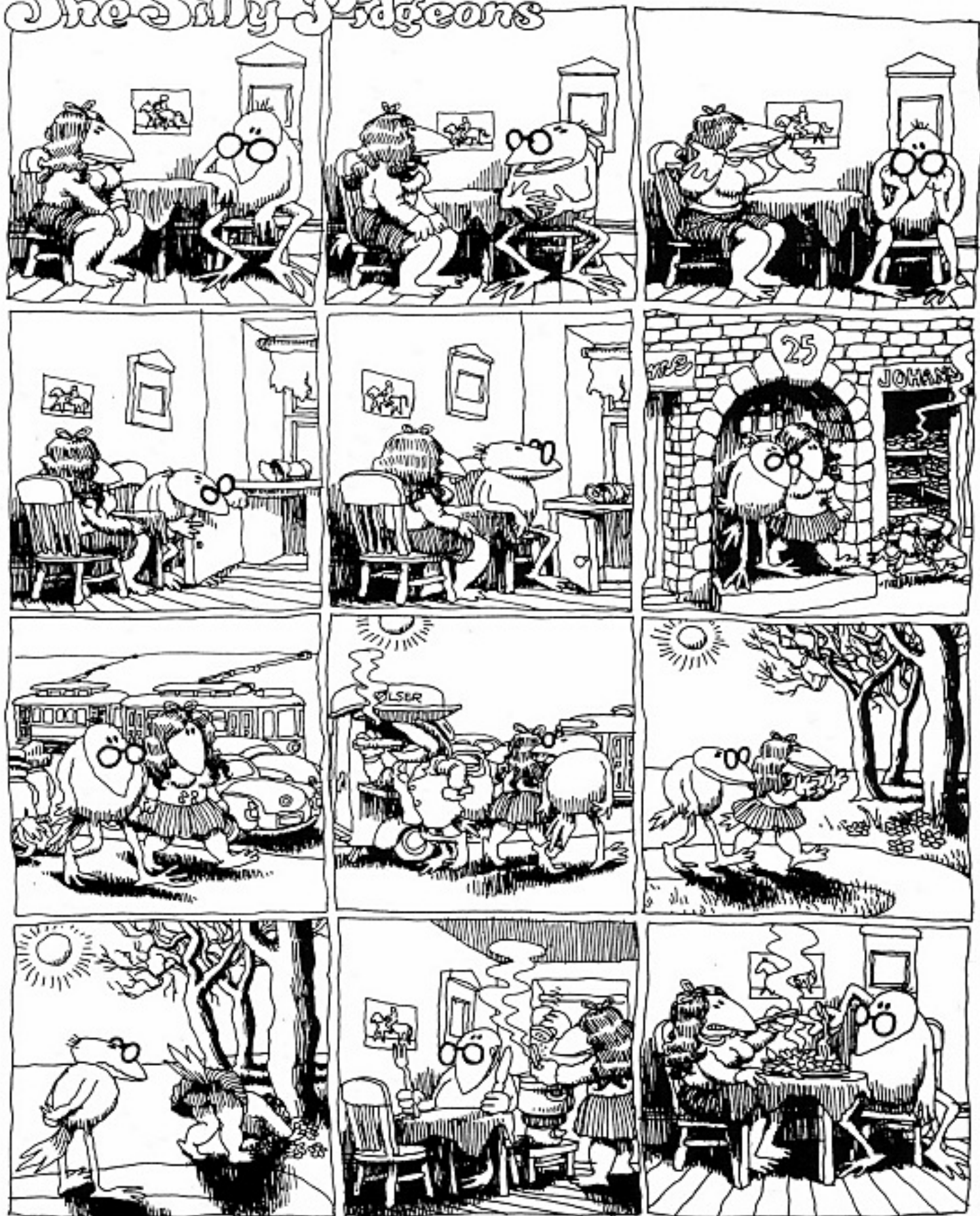


THE END

the Silly Pidgeons by R. Crumb



The Silly Pidgeons



ROBERTA by R. Crumb

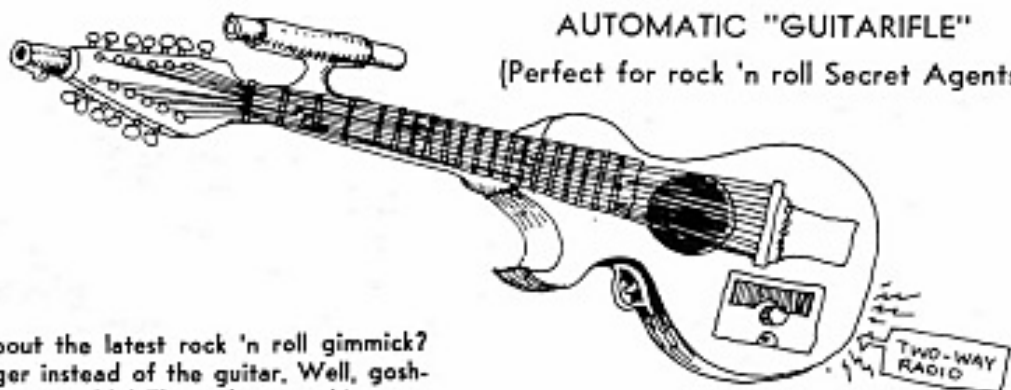


Fritz the cat MAGICIAN





AUTOMATIC "GUITARIFLE"
(Perfect for rock 'n roll Secret Agents)



Have you heard about the latest rock 'n roll gimmick? You plug in the singer instead of the guitar. Well, gosh-a-rooney, it's not so impossible! These days anything can happen. And probably WILL. Take, for example, these fabulous sketches by boss artist Robert Crumb, in which he makes some dandy predictions regarding

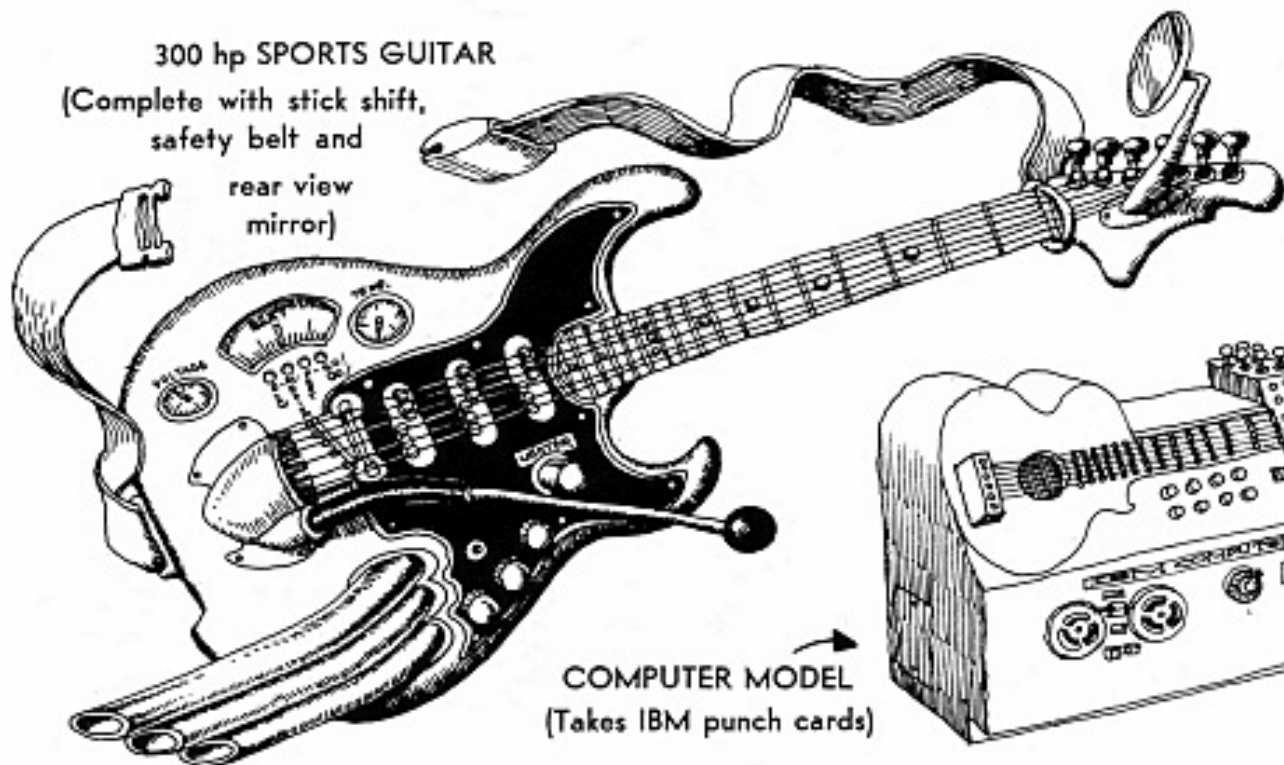
guitar models of the future

BAT-GUITAR
(For super
heroes only)



300 hp SPORTS GUITAR
(Complete with stick shift,
safety belt and

rear view
mirror)

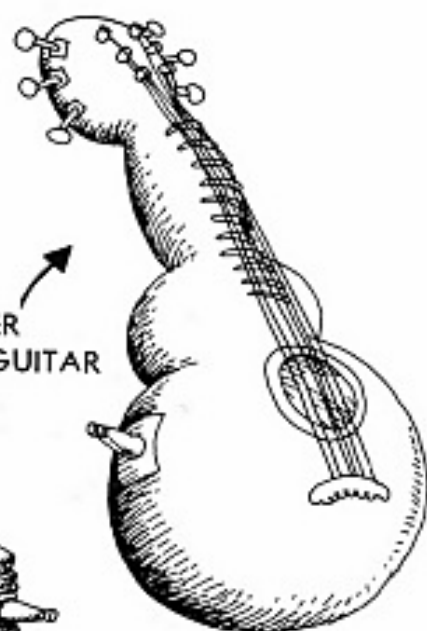


COMPUTER MODEL
(Takes IBM punch cards)

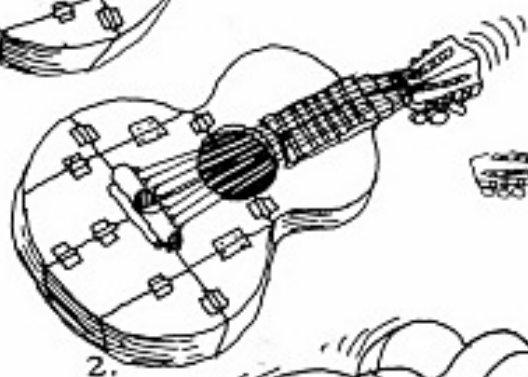


EXTENSION GUITAR
(For low budget folk-rock groups)

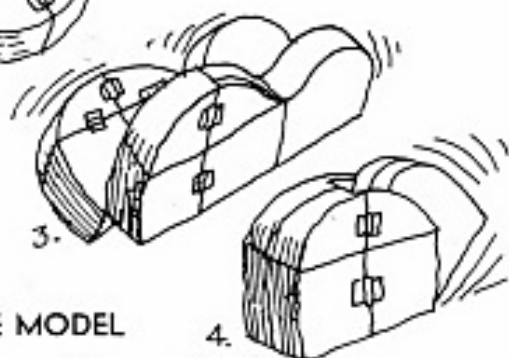
RUBBER
INFLATO-GUITAR



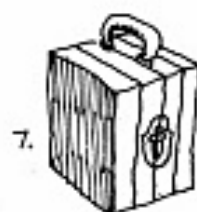
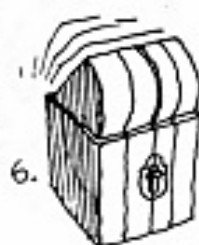
GIANT, NINE-STRING
"LEASE BREAKER" GUITAR

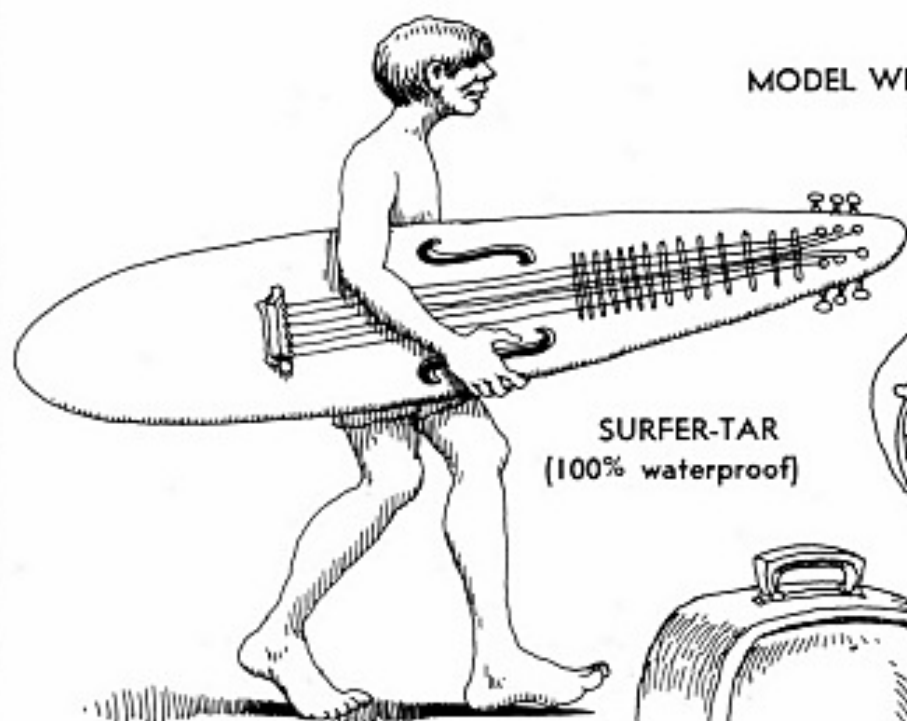


"HIS AND HERS" MODEL



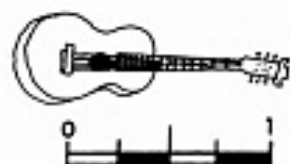
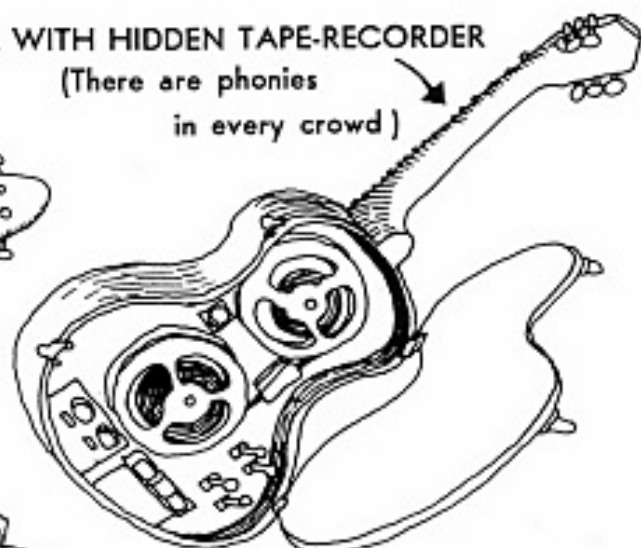
COLLAPSIBLE MODEL
(With hinged sound-box and
telescoping neck)





SURFER-TAR
(100% waterproof)

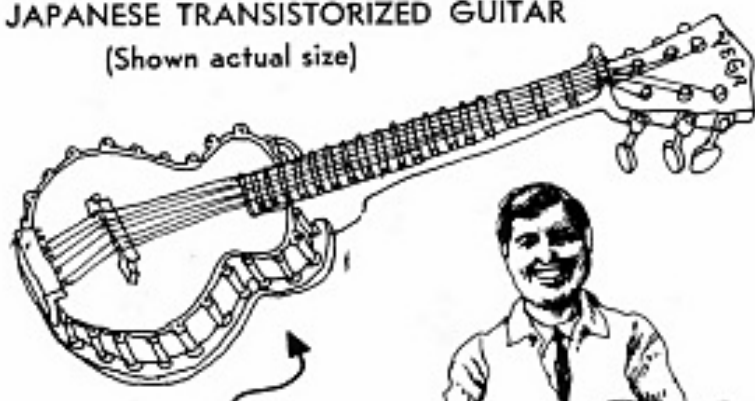
MODEL WITH HIDDEN TAPE-RECORDER
(There are phonies
in every crowd)



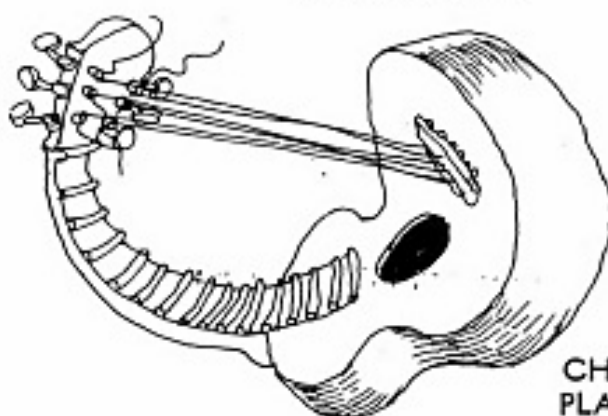
JAPANESE TRANSISTORIZED GUITAR
(Shown actual size)



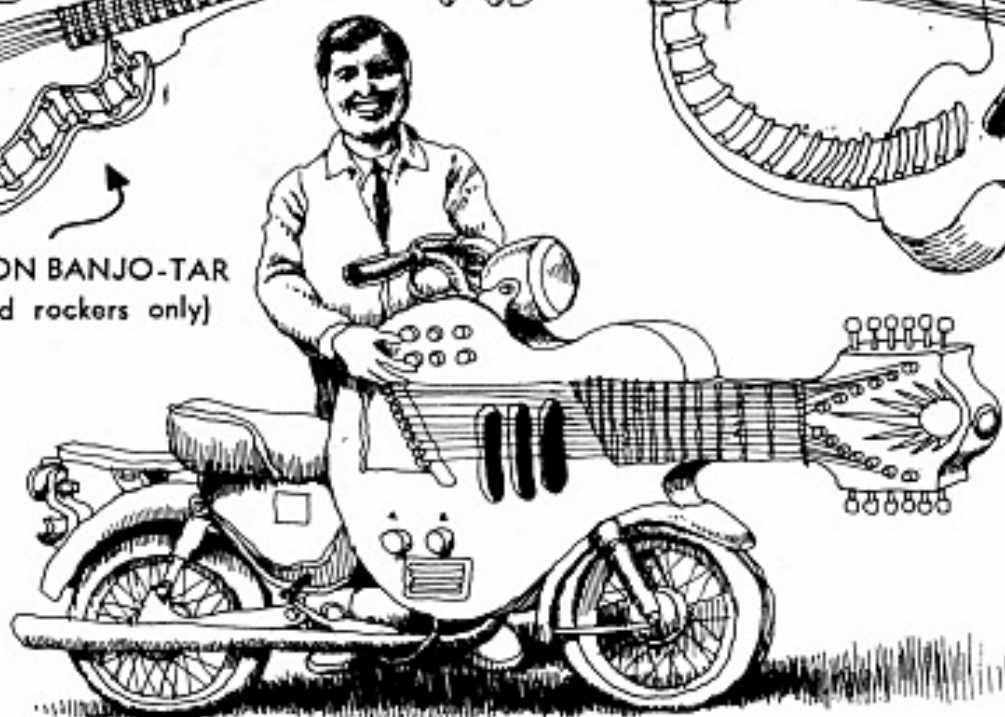
BEACH BLANKET MODEL
(Combination git-box
and portable TV)



COMBINATION BANJO-TAR
(For advanced rockers only)



**CHEAP
PLASTIC
MODEL**
(Caution:
Keep away
from heat)



"GUITAROCYCLE"
(Twelve strings and 85 m.p.h.—vroom!)

Created
by
**ROBERT
CRUMB**

The Story of the Bazooka Gift Certificate Deal

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

OR:

**HOW TO IMPRESS
YOUR BOSS**
and get **LUXURIOUS
GIFTS** at the same
time!
**FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS AND
YOURSELF AS WELL!**
ALL FOR FREE!!



Here are some of the
wonderful **NEW GIFTS**
your retailers get

FREE

in Bazooka's
new & expanded

**GIFT
CERTIFICATE
DEAL
PROMOTION**



1

These are
also the Gifts
YOU, too,
can get

FREE!

2

**Your retailers get
their Gift Certificates
by **BUYING** boxes of
Bazooka's Gift
Certificate Deals
FROM YOU!**

(There's one Certificate
packed inside every 480-count
box of 1¢ BAZOOKA. There's
a ½ certificate packed inside
every 48-count box of 5¢
BAZOOKA clips and 5¢
BAZOOKA bars.)



YOU get your
certificates by
SELLING boxes of
Bazooka's Gift
Certificate Deals
to your retailers.



To be precise, you get a
full value Certificate for
every case* of Bazooka's
Certificate Deals you sell...
...AS A SPECIAL BONUS UNTIL
MARCH 1, 1966!!



* one case is made up of only
six 480-count 1¢ deals or
twelve 48-count 5¢ clip
or 5¢ bar deals.



GREAT

... you might say...

BUT HOW MANY
CERTIFICATES DOES IT TAKE
IN ORDER TO GET
FREE GIFTS



6

It can take as little
or as many as you want!

If a retailer buys
only **10** (ten!) boxes of 480
count Bazooka from you,
he'll have enough certificates
to get this set of **Eight**

**MONOGRAMMED
LUSTREWARE
GLASSES**



7

When you sell only
60 (sixty!) boxes of 480
count Bazooka, **YOU'LL**
be able to get that set of
Monogrammed Glassware
TOO!



8

How about this
9-cup CORNING WARE
PERCOLATOR?
 Your retailers can get
 it **FREE** for the
 Certificates packed in
 only **TWELVE**
 480 count deals!



9

Sell only **SIX**
 retailers enough deals
 to get that Corning
 Ware Percolator and
 you'll have enough
 Certificates to
 get it, too!



10

You and your retailers can get
 Christian Dior Perfume for as little
 as **6 Certificates** or a **Kodak**
 Instamatic Camera (with flashcube)
 for only **19 certificates**.

Or, if you prefer, you can save towards
 an **RCA Stereo Phonograph**, free for **98**
 certificates, or a **Westinghouse Air**
 Conditioner, free for **180 certificates**!

plus many, many more nationally-advertised brand
 name items, from **Samsonite Luggage**, **GE Washing**
 Machines, **Martex Towels**,...up to an entire houseful of
 furniture by **Baumritter**—**All FREE** for
Bazooka Gift Certificates!

11



Each time you make a **NEW PLACEMENT** of a **Bazooka Gift Certificate Deal** you **AUTOMATICALLY** set your customer up to give you repeat orders!

(The faster a retailer collects Certificates, the faster he can cash them in for FREE GIFTS!)

Which means you **AUTOMATICALLY** earn
Bonus Certificates for yourself!



Get the point?

It's FAST and EASY for both your retailers and you to get the wonderful free gifts in the

**NEW & EXPANDED
BAZOOKA GIFT
CERTIFICATE DEAL!**



BUT!

**To BUY the
BAZOOKA GIFT
CERTIFICATE DEALS**

**your retailers
first have to know
that they exist!**



**...WHICH IS
WHY WE
PREPARED
THIS
BOOKLET**

**(so you could
tell them
about it!)**



**And which is also
why we're giving YOU
the chance to get
these same great
gifts for free...**

**It's our way of
saying "THANKS A
MILLION!"**



THE HEAP YEARS

of the Auto-1946-59

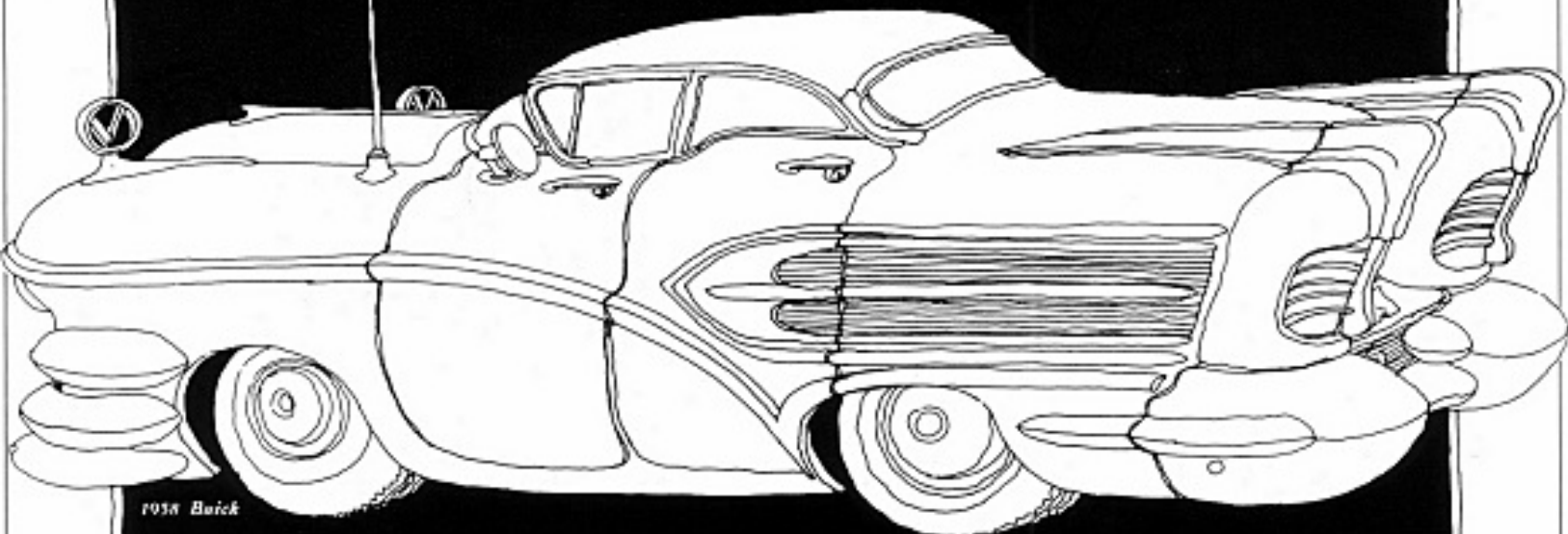
As we stand on the threshold of "The Great Society," scaling new and dizzying levels of hipness and sophistication daily, let's not forget that we've only just come out of what has been dubbed, by the merciful, "The Post War Era." The blah tag fits. Though still a bit close to us for truly objective analysis, it's pretty generally agreed that those years pushed mediocrity as a way of life. It was "The Age of Bland Achievements," an era of complacency and indifference. All that was worthy, and there wasn't much, was ignored. Amorphous, in-offensive, uncommitted physical and mental blob and glob were exalted.

It was a time of Ozzie Nelson, Loretta Young, The Mickey Mouse Club, Richard Nixon and Hawaiian shirts. It was an era that saw the birth of television as the tyrannical cyclops of the living room, prefab, look-alike

housing developments, unlovely shopping centers, motivational research, the Cold War, back-yard barbecues, fall-out shelters and the aimless, useless overproduction of a billion plastic, disposable "things" that kept millions employed without knowing or caring where it would all lead.

And it was the time of the "heap." Nowhere, in any single object, is the noncommittal, directionless attitude of The Post War Era better expressed than in the fat, shapless, chrome-plated pastry, the bulbous, bulky monster, which had become the American automobile. These hymns to clumsiness, the pathetic Nash-Rambler and Desotos that now sit like rusting mountains of awkward bathtubs in the junkyards of America, had become the ideals, the classics of the "Heap Years."

— Bob Crumb



1958 Buick

R. Crumb

In 1946, America looked eagerly toward the future. We expected an age of supersonic living, an ultimate, streamlined, atomic-powered world of robot machines and sweeping silver skyways that curve between and around mile-high buildings in mechanized cities. Cars tried to look like jet planes. The tear-drop shape Detroit called it



1947 Studebaker



1951 Henry J.



1948 Hudson



1951 Nash



1947 Packard

Like aging women, distinct lines disappeared as cars put on more and more weight. Such classics as the Packard became bloated renditions of their former selves. Cheap, jello-mold patterns were used to stamp out new, shoddy models that lasted only a few years. Experiments in grillwork designs resulted in what Europeans called "The Dollar Grin."



1950 Buick



1947 Kaiser



1956 Pontiac



1956 Oldsmobile



1956 DeSoto

By the middle fifties, the front ends were beginning to find their place in the average man's life as a symbol of power and freedom, a means of escape. Cars began to look tough, mean, belligerent. Horsepower was the magic word, and cars started sporting fancy names like "Fury," "Hornet," "Golden Hawk," "Thunderbird," "Firebird," "Thundercloud," etc.



1958 Dodge



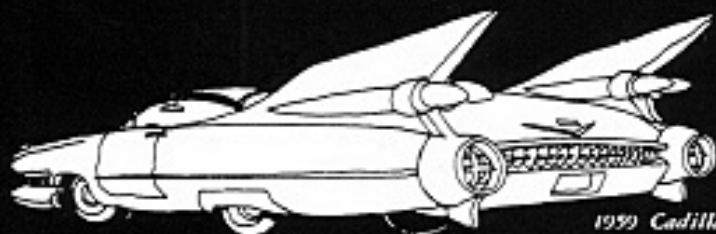
1957 Cadillac

During Eisenhower's last term in office, the heap reached its peak. Detroit went hog-wild and produced an array of monstrosities the like of which had never been seen.

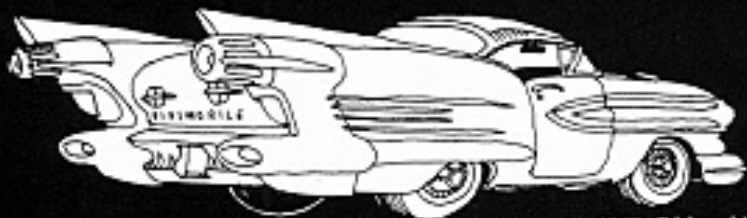
Like the tailfin, for instance. Starting as a minor detail on the Cadillac, it soon evolved into the huge, metal points of science-fiction, space-ship fame, with all manner of non-working firing rockets and ray guns attached.

To make this journey back to Buck Rogers even more complete, cars were liberally frosted and sprinkled with chrome strips and ornamental gadgets of no consequence.

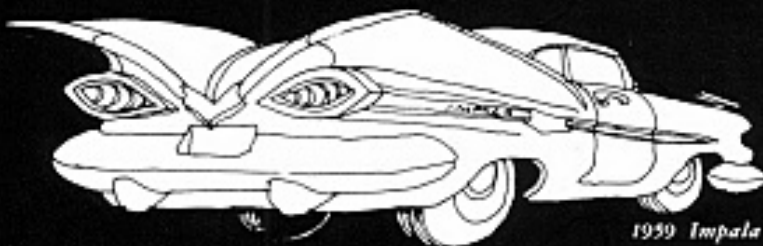
The heap had reached its limit. Detroit had gone too far and Americans were tired of it. The country was beginning to move in a new direction and the heap was fast becoming a thing of the past—a monument to ugliness, a mastodon that no longer belonged.



1959 Cadillac



1957 Oldsmobile



1959 Impala



1958 Mercury

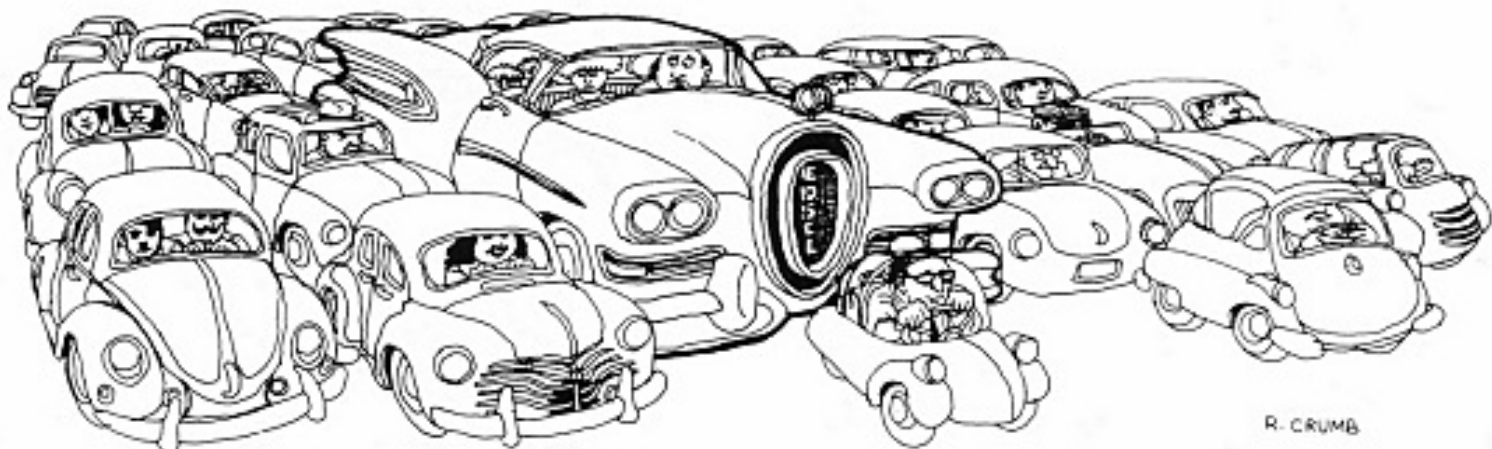


1958 Plymouth

One last, desperate fling was made to keep the heap alive, but it was a total disaster, a miserable failure. Nobody was buying heaps anymore. Suddenly, there were all these funny little European cars all over the place, and Detroit saw the light. The "compact" was born. Then came the Ameri-

can sportscar. And now, we've come full cycle, and the big, powerful classic commands the market again.

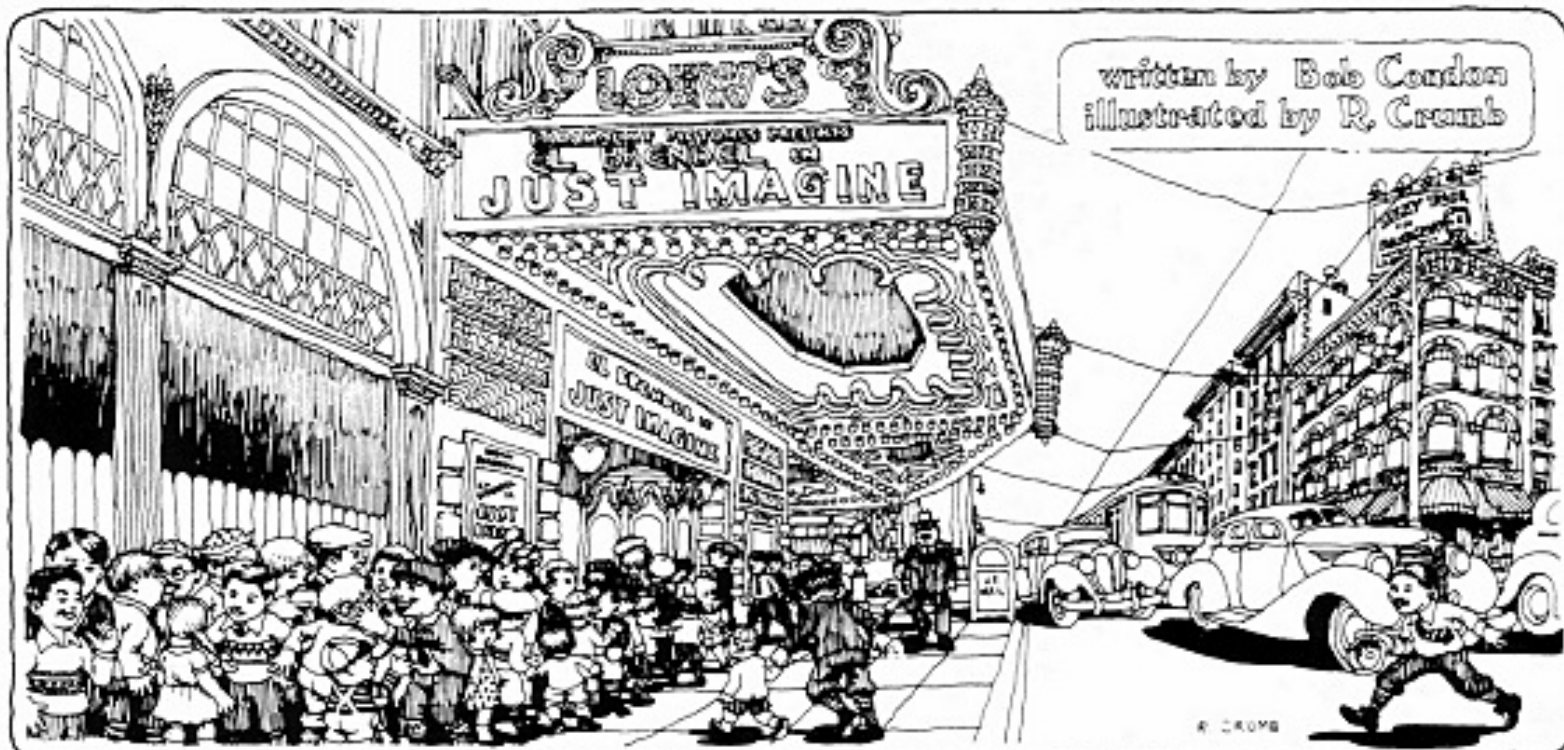
The heap is dead. They just don't make cars like that anymore, thank whatever-it-is that guides the hand of Detroit and dictates public taste.



R. CRUMB

The Small Small Businessmen

Movie money was hard to come by in the Depression. Here's how enterprising young businessmen met the problem in New York City's Washington Heights.



Back in the Thirties in Washington Heights, a very young man's fancy turned, as springtime blossomed, to making money. The money, primarily, was for the Saturday afternoon movie which meant the latest chapter of *Scotty of the Scouts* or *The Mystery of the Lost Gold Mine*. Usually they had fifteen episodes,



and after the first in a series you were hooked. In the winter your mother was happy to give you money for the movies just to get you out from under. But in the spring and summer she was more apt to tell you, "Go out and play, the fresh air and sunshine will do you good." A lot she knew about *El Brendel and the City of the Future*!



It was imperative to see every chapter, for if by chance you didn't have the 20 cents it meant not only spending the afternoon alone but, what was worse, watching your pals, when they returned, act out the missing episode. Looking back, their theatrical endeavors seem much better than anything that could have transpired on the screen but then it was no consolation to a 10-year-old boy.

Earning money was a skill handed down from older brother to younger, much as the cobbler taught the trade to his son.

We fidgeted in school in the spring fretfully watching the skies and praying for a three o'clock rain. If it came, and it came often, we would race home, borrow dad's umbrella and then run to the subway station at 168th Street and Broadway. We were looking for women who had left home for downtown



shopping on a clear day and returned to a spring downpour. Like sparrows we would chirp, "Walk you home, lady, 15 cents for five blocks, a quarter after that." Of course, she got the umbrella, and you got whatever packages she had and hoped for a short run. It was a brisk business, as long as the rain held out, and by running back each time you might squeeze in four trips depending on the competition. All the while you were getting soaked, and explaining to your mother how you got wet after coming home purposely for an umbrella somehow took the joy out of private enterprise. But on a good day you might make enough for the rest of the week, with the movie money set aside and the lunchtime candy money jingling in your pocket.

On Sunday mornings, after church, we would race



home, change clothes, then run across Edgecombe Avenue into Highbridge Park. Every Sunday our local Mafia representative ran a craps game on "the path," the main thoroughfare through the park. We would linger on the fringe of the crowd of men until Big Augie had got the game underway. Then he would point at random at two of us, and we would dash over to Amsterdam Avenue to Coard's Candy Store for a case of cold soda. When we returned Augie would give us each 50 cents, and we would squat by the case and deliver sodas to thirty men. Augie charged them \$1 a bottle. After the game, we would stack the empties in the case and carry them behind Augie to prevent any other kids from snatching a bottle while we had our hands full. There were 16 bottles in the case, which came to 80 cents on return, so the day's profit for one was 90 cents with the original half buck from Big Augie.



The kids whom Augie ignored would also hasten to the same candy store to buy Italian twists. The Italians either smoked or chewed them. The Italians had a bocce court laid out, and the Sunday games were for money. There were big turnouts, Sunday dinner was over and the jackets were off and the sleeve garters of purple and yellow bloomed in the sun. The little business men were patient. When a man missed a winning roll, he would throw his rope down and grind it into the sand. Keep an eye on him! In time all the ropes, which cost 10 cents at the store, would be sold for whatever the traffic would bear.

In summer money came easier. We would walk down to 155th Street, across the viaduct and MacComb's Dam Bridge (as a kid I thought they called it that because it was so ugly) and over to Yankee Sta-



dium. We had to get there very early to head up the line of kids between the ages of ten and twelve to turn turnstiles as the customers grabbed the tickets. Older boys worked as vendors. We began about 11, when the batting practice fans arrived, and continued to spin until the third inning was over. We were then given 75 cents and allowed to watch the rest of the game. This was hotdog heaven, the days of Gehrig and Ruth. But making that shape-up every day was rough, because if you missed, it was a long, hot walk home with the smell of mustard and lemonade in your head.



I never worked the Polo Grounds although it was only 10 blocks from home. But its proximity gave us an opportunity for extra income: offering to "watch" cars parked on the Harlem River Speedway, and the veiled threat usually got you a dime. Some kids would wipe down the cars entrusted to them, relying on the kindness of the owners for an extra tip. Once in a great while we would park cars for a big Stadium event. (But we hurried home practically penniless the night Schmeling beat Joe Louis, because we were too close to Harlem and Harlem had lost heavily.



One Irish kid in the neighborhood had a steady clientele of Orthodox Jews for whom he lit stoves every Saturday morning. He had one or two customers who wouldn't handle money on the Sabbath, and he would walk them to the subway and deposit their fare. He had two hours work every Saturday, movie money guaranteed, and delicious knishes during the week.

A job as a delivery boy could earn you money, but it completely defeated the purpose. You had to work all day Saturday, and if you were working, how could you go to the movies? Anyway, delivery boys went with girls, and who needed that?

Almost every day we would scour cellars for deposit bottles. It was hard work since most of the janitors also wanted the deposit.



Our theaters were the Drury Lane, the Rio, the Hudson and the Uptown. But usually we were stuck with the same theater every Saturday for years on end. Mid-week holidays and special occasions we often went to the movies but we would avoid our Saturday theater with a vengeance. Once you started a serial you had to see all 15 chapters, and on the day of the last chapter the shrewd manager would show the first chapter of the next serial. Alas, we were hooked for another 14 weeks. The only way out was to grow old enough to notice girls.

But these innocent pursuits of the Almighty Dime seem to have gone the way of the high cost of living. The only small, small businessmen I see now are shoe shine boys. Recently I came out of the subway into a pouring rain and looked for the kid with the umbrella. But all I saw were three cabs with off-duty signs parked in front of Riker's. ♣

Punchlines for "Monster Greetings" cards (punchlines appeared on the back of the cards with a photo of a model or models in monster makeup).

Page 92, left to right:

I Love Your Beautiful Eyes...
...All Four of Them!

There'll Never Be Another You...
...Thank Goodness!

You're the Caveman Type...
...Hairy and Ugly!

When I Grow Up I'll Be Just Like You...
...Old and Ugly!

I Love You When You Smile...
...I Love Fangs!



I Keep Your Picture in My Room...
...To Scare Off Ghosts!

I'd Like to Go Out With You...
...When They Clean Your Cage!

I Was at a Monster Bazaar...
...And I Won You!

You May Not Be Handsome or Brilliant...
...But Nobody's Perfect!

Page 93, left to right:

I Like You...
...But I Have Strange Tastes!

I'd Like to Gaze Into Your Eyes...
...If I Could Find the Other One!

I'd Like to Give You a Big Squeeze...
...[Photo of a head in a vise.]

When I'm Next to You...
...Even I Look Good!

You Do a Great Twist...
...At Least Your Nose Does.

Isn't it Great to Be Alive?...
...But How Would You Know?

You Really Use Your Head...
...Who Else Would Want To?

You're Out of This World...
...Stay There!

If You Work Your Fingers to the Bone, What Do You Get?...
...Bony Fingers!

Punchlines for greeting cards on page 96

Left: Get well soon, signed, Nobody.

Right: You could have a full-length mirror!

4 APRIL 1960

NOTE

PHILADELPHIA
"CITY OF BROTHERLY
LOVE"



R. CRUMB

JUNE 3
1960

NOTE



PAHLS FINDING "ZULUS BALL"/"WORKING MAN
BLUES" BY KING OLIVER ON GENNETT LABEL

NOTE

TOTAL
DESTRUCTION
IS AT
HAND!



note

SUNDAY
28 MAY 1961

MERCY!
MERCY!



n o t e

SUNDAY, 5 NOVEMBER



12/03



Cleveland
WELCOMES
YOU!



FRIITZ

THE CAT

in
*Fritz
Bugs
Out*



FROTTZ

THE CAT

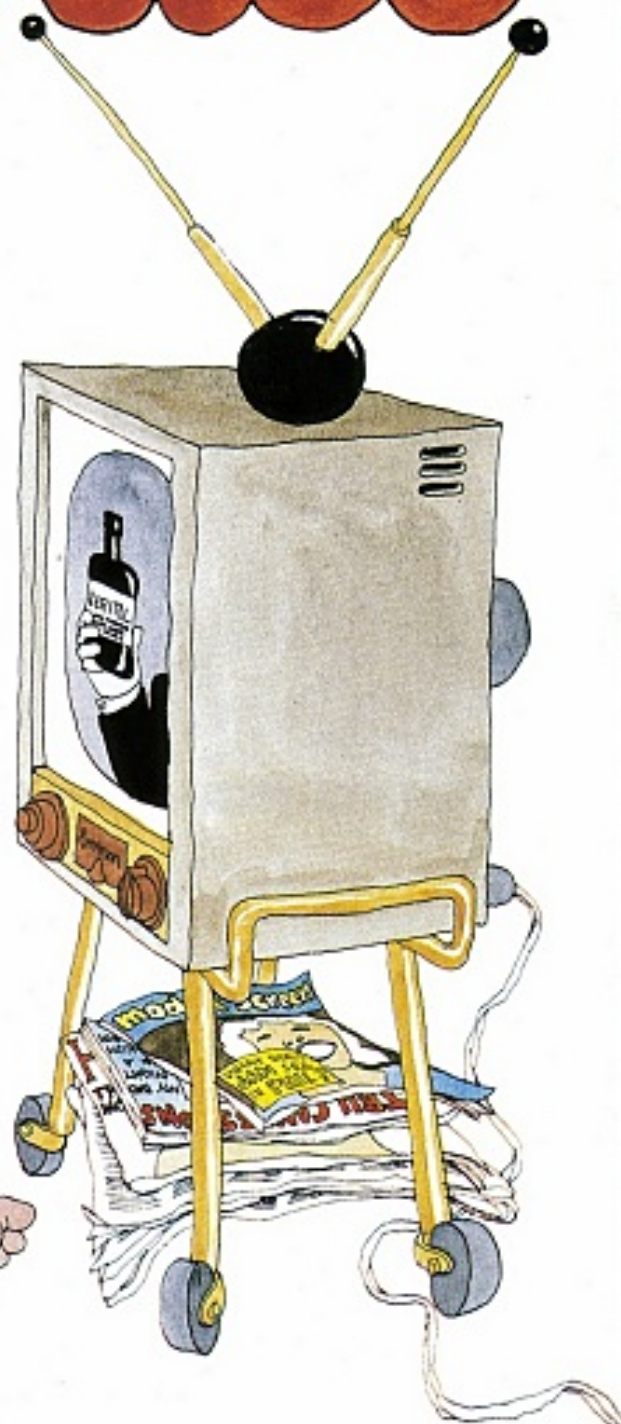
I WONDER IF
MY PRESENCE HERE
IN RED CHINA HAS
BEEN OBSERVED
YET!!

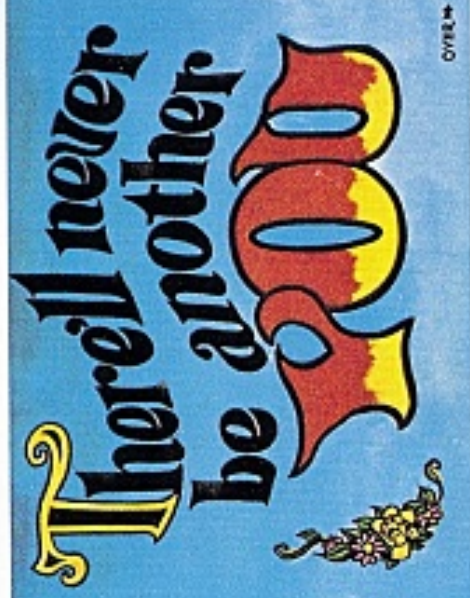


Special Agent
for the C.I.A.



Roberta





**You're the
Caveman type**



**When I grow
up I'll be like
you!**



**I LOVE WHEN YOU
SMILE!**



**I KEEP YOUR
PICTURE
IN MY ROOM.**



**I'D LIKE TO
GO OUT
WITH YOU**



**I WAS AT A
MONSTER BAZAAR**



**You may not be
handsome or
brilliant...**



**I LIKE
YOU**



**I'D LIKE
TO
GAZE
INTO YOUR
EYES!**



over

**I'd like to
give you a
BIG
SQUEEZE**



over...

**When I'm
next to you..**



SEE BACK

**YOU DO A
GREAT TWIST**



SEE BACK

**ISN'T IT
GREAT
TO BE ALIVE?**



SEE
BACK

**YOU REALLY
USE YOUR
HEAD**



SEE
BACK

**You're
out
of
this
world**



SEE BACK →

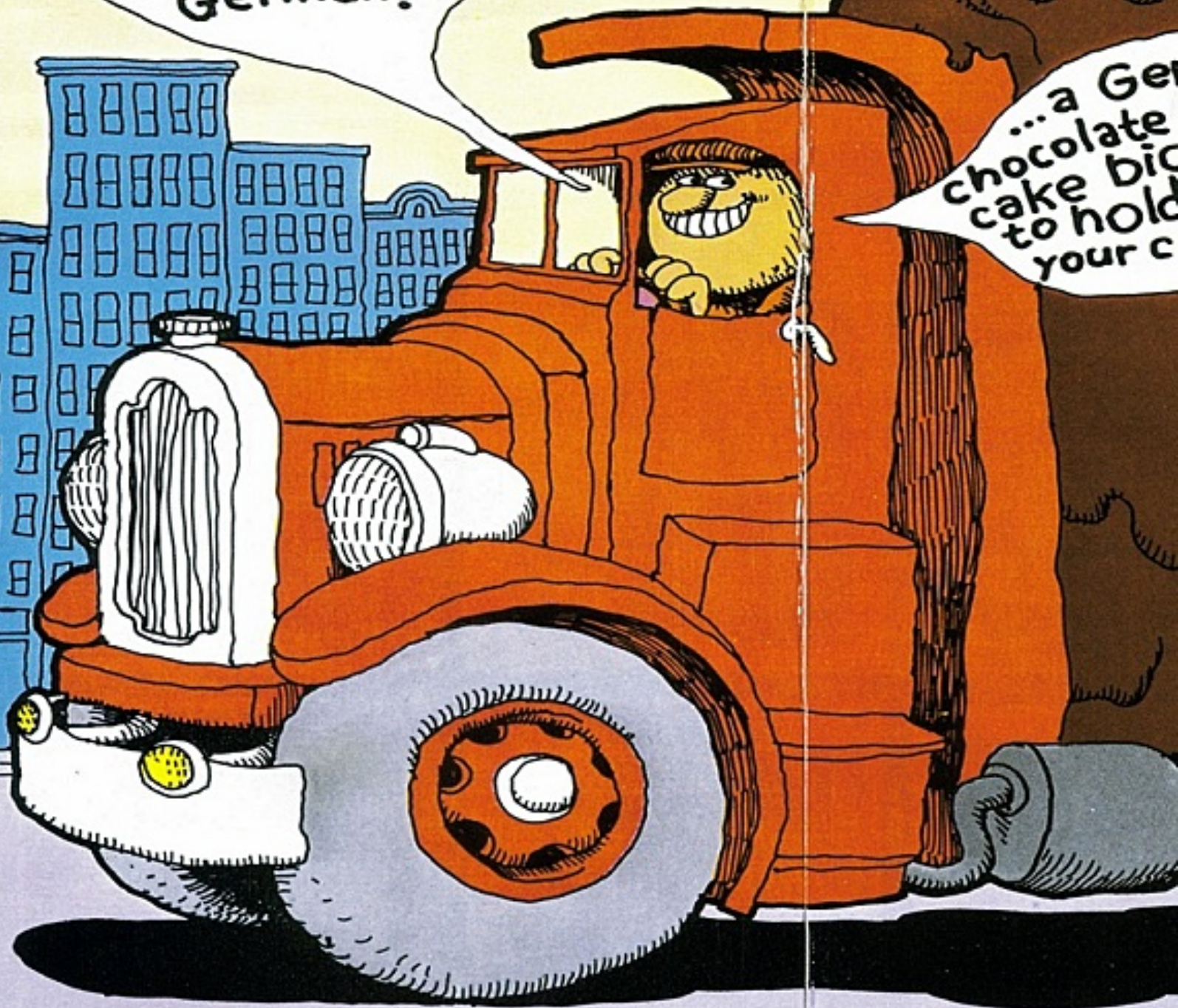
**If you work
your fingers
to the bone,
what do you
get?**



over

do you know
what's brown and
round and weighs
7000 pounds and
says "HAPPY
BIRTHDAY" in
German?

...a Ger
chocolate
cake big
to hold
your c



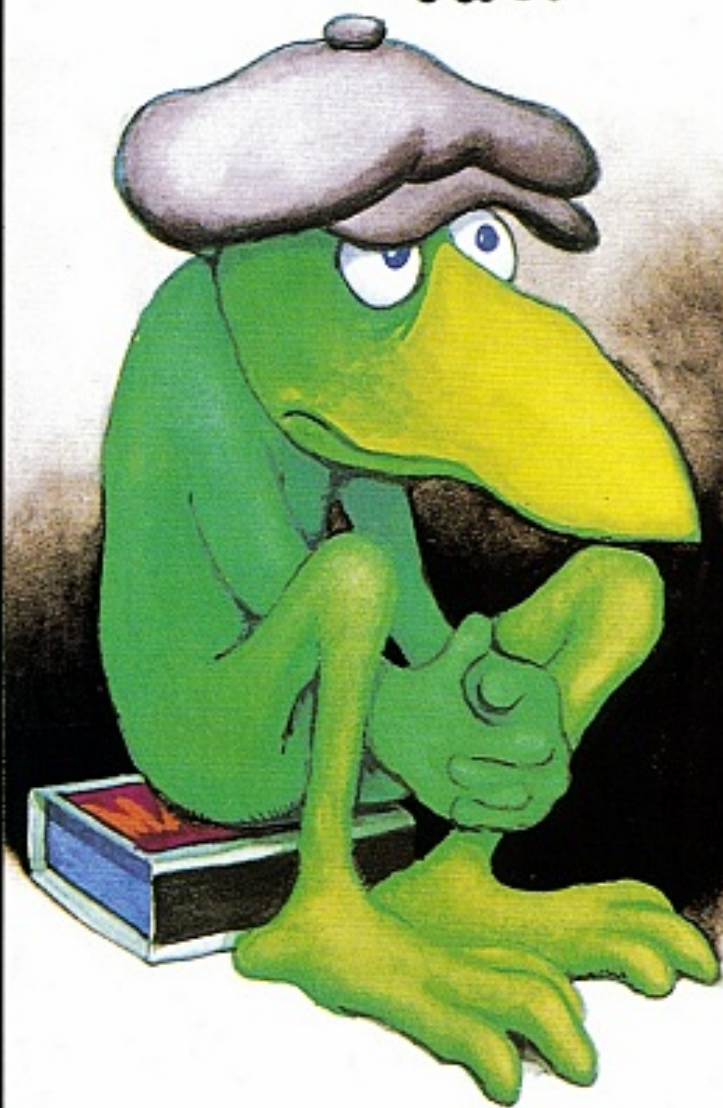
erman
Birthday
enough
all
andles!

die besten
Wünsche
zum
Geburtstage



*Happy Birthday

nobody
wants you
when you're
down and
out.

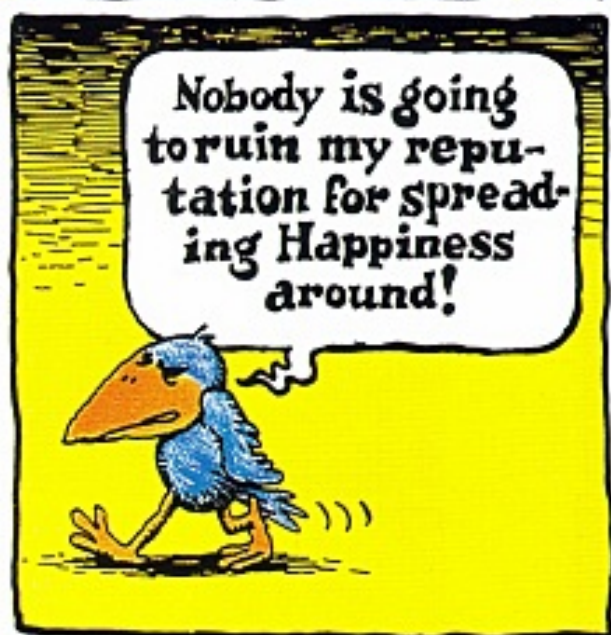


**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!**

and don't worry if
you find a few more
wrinkles when you
look in the mirror!

CHEER UP! Things
could be a lot worse!





happy birthday

I WAS FEELING BLUE BECAUSE I WAS BROKE AND YOUR BIRTHDAY WAS COMING UP, SO JUST TO KEEP MY MIND BUSY, I DECIDED TO RECOVER THE OLD SOFA THAT I BOUGHT AT A SECOND-HAND STORE YEARS AGO.





Cleveland
is WAITING for
you



[Card to Mike Britt, January 1964]

NO. 1

FUG



Fritz the cat



FRITZ IS A SOPHISTICATED, UP-TO-THE-MINUTE YOUNG FELINE COLLEGE STUDENT WHO LIVES IN A MODERN "SUPERCITY" OF MILLIONS OF ANIMALS... YES, NOT UNLIKE PEOPLE IN THEIR MANNERS AND MORALS....























i was going
to entertain
you on your
BIRTHDAY
with a sexy
bubble dance...

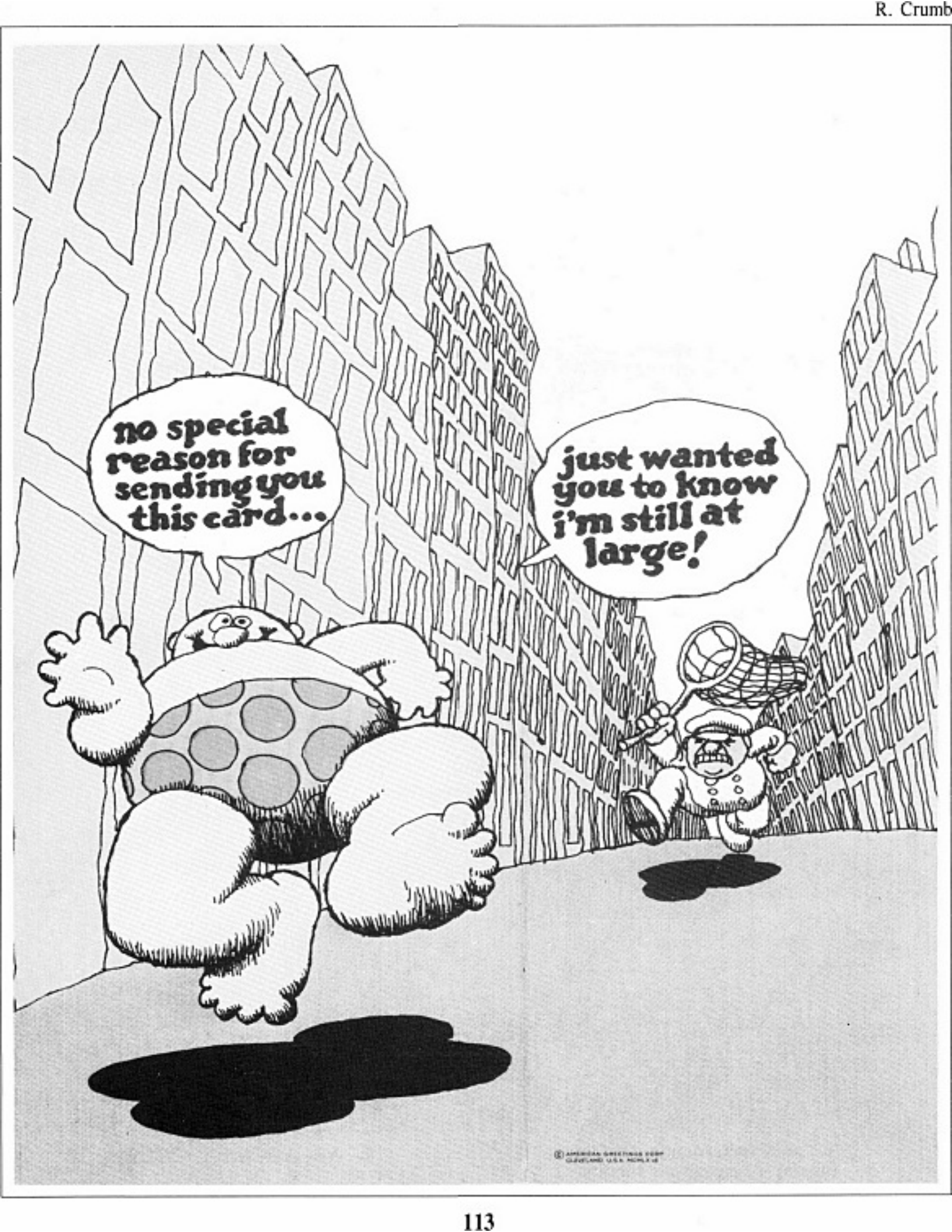


[...but my mother said, "no soap!"]

WOULDN'T YOU
BE SURPRISED IF
YOU OPENED THIS
CARD AND FOUND
A **TEN**
DOLLAR
BILL
?



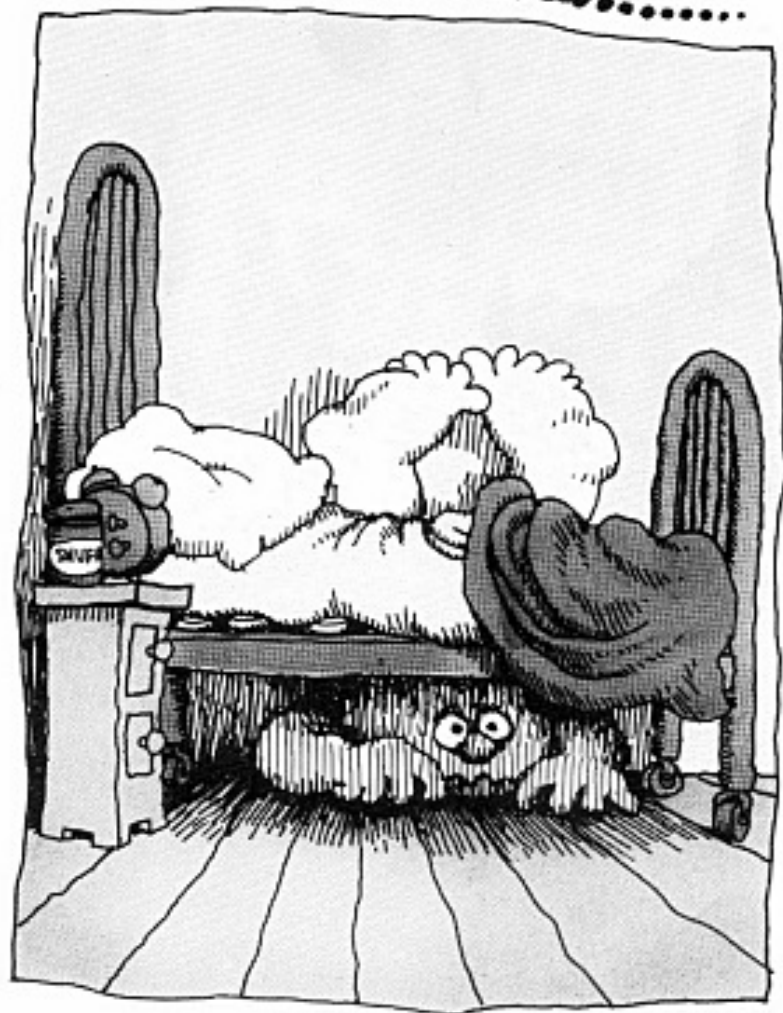
[...I'd certainly be surprised
if you found a ten dollar bill!]



no special
reason for
sending you
this card...

just wanted
you to know
i'm still at
large!

I should have known it was going to be a bad day when I fell down in the crack between the bed and the wall.....



[...and sure enough, that was the day I forgot your birthday.]

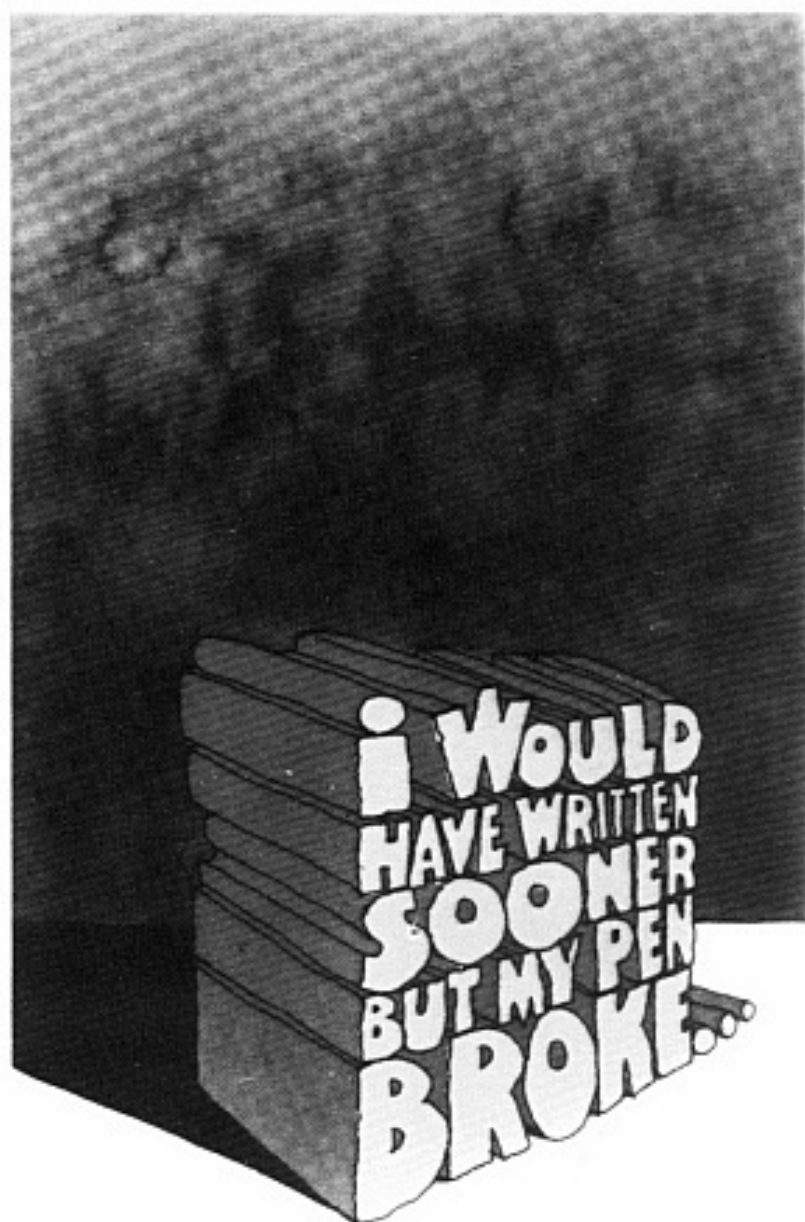
Merry Christmas



[...you cute little DICKENS!]

I GOT YOUR
BIRTHDAY PRESENT
ALL WRAPPED UP, BUT A
FAMILY OF MICE MADE
A NEST IN IT.

I DIDN'T HAVE THE
HEART TO EVICT THE
LITTLE CRITTERS...



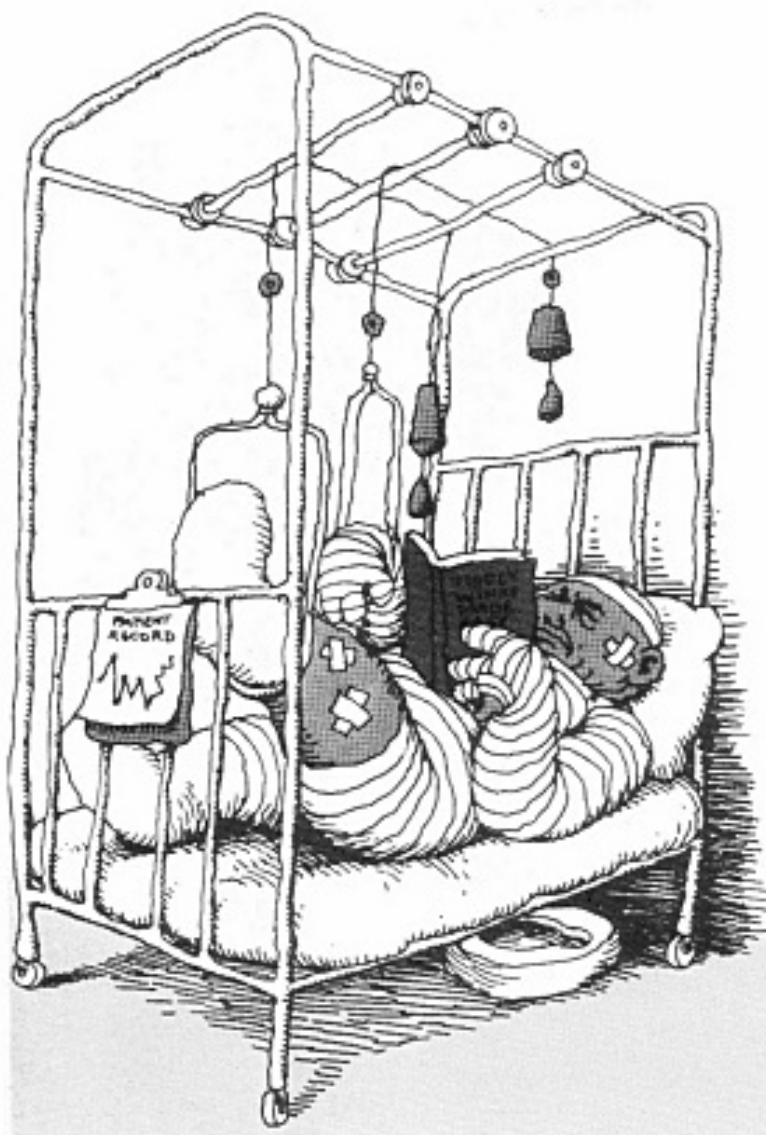
[The cake would probably taste kind of weird anyway!]

...AND IT'S TAKEN
ME JUST THIS
LONG TO ROUND UP
THE LITTLE
CRITTERS!



SORRY ABOUT YOUR ACCIDENT...

...BUT YOU'RE IN GOOD SHAPE
COMPARED TO MY POOR OL' UNCLE
CHARLIE! HE'S IN BED WITH
7 BROKEN RIBS, 19 LACERATIONS,
32 FRACTURES, AND 45 BLACK
AND BLUE MARKS.



[He took a full swing at a golf ball in a tile bathroom!]

TIS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS



AND HERE I AM NESTLED SNUG
IN MY BED, WHILE VISIONS OF SUGAR
PLUMS DANCE IN MY HEAD..

[Hi Sugar Plum!]

When the local press contacted me on your Birthday asking your age and other personal questions, I repeatedly told them "No comment" but I was finally pressured into making a statement.



SAY, HOW
WOULD YOU LIKE
TO HAVE SOME
FUN?

...I BOUGHT A
NEW JIG-SAW PUZZLE
THE OTHER DAY, AND
I'M SENDING YOU
ONE OF THE
PIECES...



[Panel two: However, I firmly denied a report you were seated in the theater when Lincoln was assassinated!
Panel three: I told them you were actually in the lobby when the shooting occurred.]

[...Bring it over some night
and we'll make the scene!]

Here's **5** GOOD REASONS
WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE
A **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**



[Photo of a fist.]

WHEN I FIRST SAW
YOU,
ZING
WENT THE STRING
OF MY
HEART!



CARD NO.	235		GROUP 13	
	MONTH	YEAR	SALES	RATING
FIRST	July	1972	6	29
FINAL				

[Punchline unavailable]

**I like you 'cause
when you're good,
you're very, very
good...**



**...but
when
you're
bad.....**

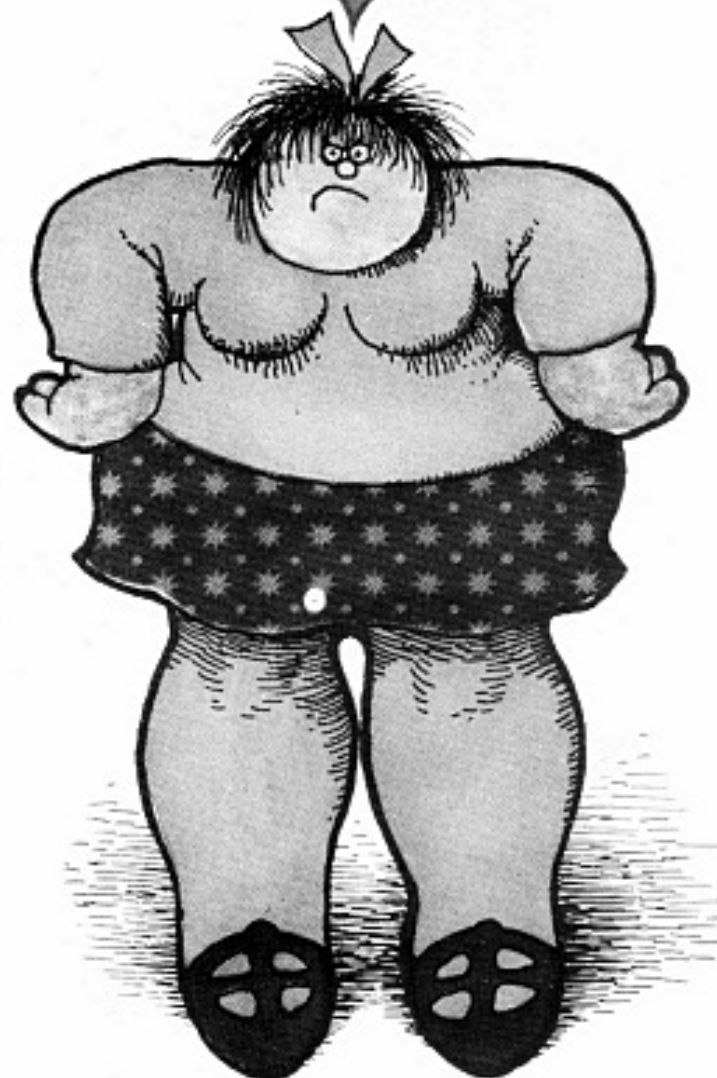
[...you're better!]

**IT'S YOUR
DAY, SO
RAISE
HELL
TONIGHT!**



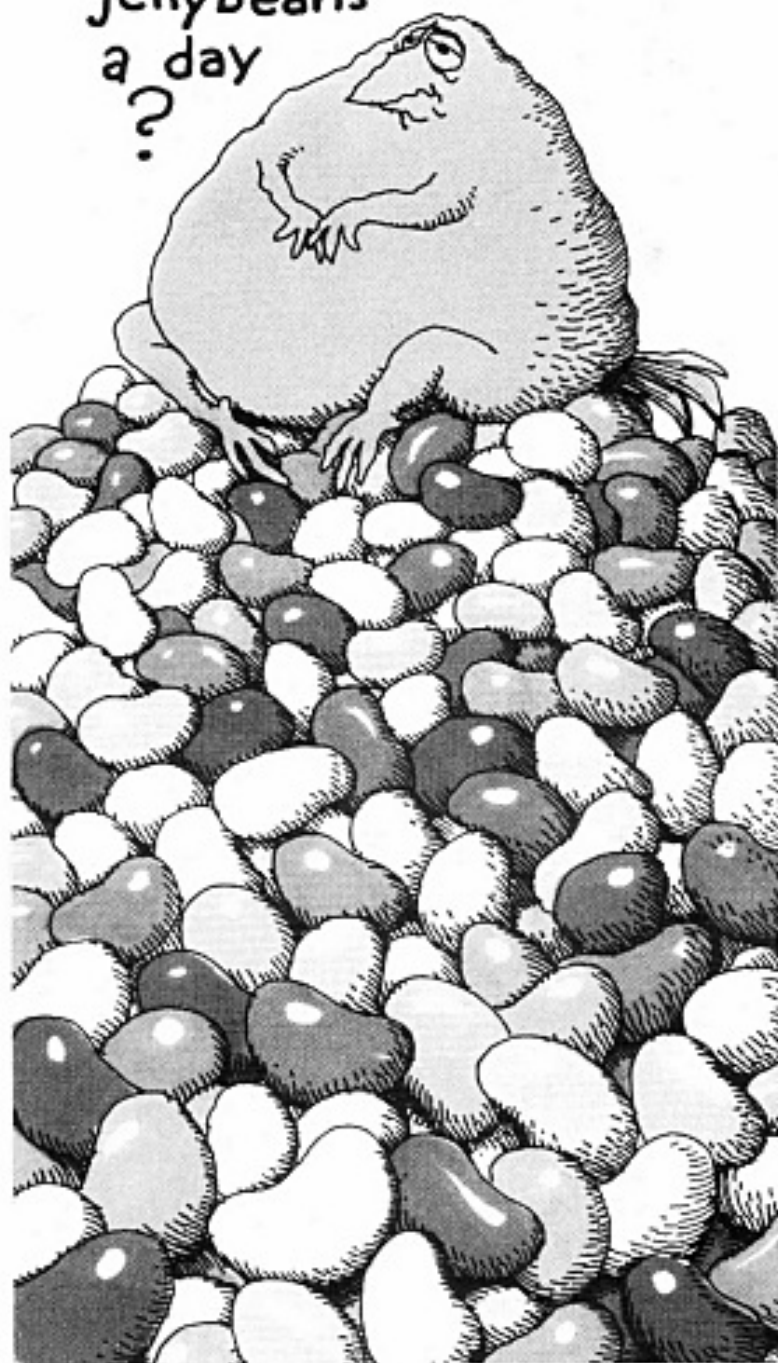
[You can always raise BAIL tomorrow!]

I'm not askin'
you to be my
Valentine



[I'm tellin' ya!]

Did you know
that one single
"Jellybellied Beanbearer"
can lay over 1,000,000
jellybeans
a day
?



[...and there's no telling how many
a married one could lay!]

DAD...



...MOM COULD
HAVE MARRIED
ELMER SMITHERS,
THE FEED DEALER...

...OR OSGOOD
PERKINS, THE
BIG SHOT DENTIST...



...OR EVEN THAT RICH
BANKER, THADDIUS
TITEPOCKETS

....BUT NO, SHE
MARRIED YOU
INSTEAD

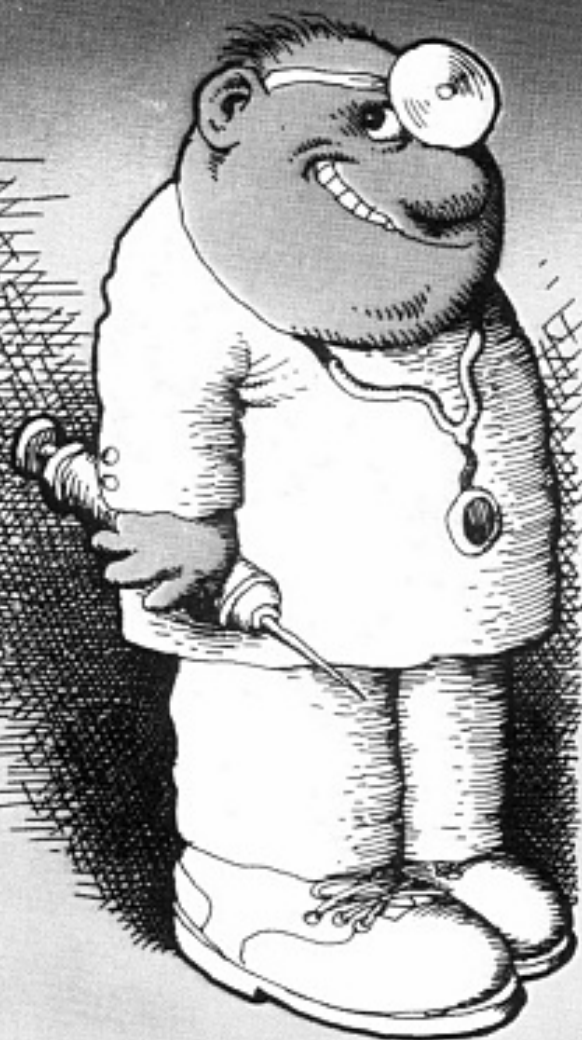
[...thank goodness!]

YOU NEVER CHANGE!
HOW DO YOU DO IT?
YOU'VE BEEN THE SAME
GREAT SIZE AND
SHAPE FOR YEARS!



[Just like the Volkswagen!]

WE'RE BOTH
SORRY YOU'RE
SICK... BUT
DON'T WORRY,
YOUR DOCTOR
KNOWS JUST WHAT
YOU NEED!!!



[Punchline unavailable]

When I'm with you
my Bad Self says:



But my Good Self
says:







(You'd think they'd
have designed one that
didn't leak by this
time!!)



Congratulations!!!

**GEE, I'VE BEEN
HAVING FUNNY DREAMS
ABOUT YOU LATELY!**



**FOR INSTANCE,
TWO NIGHTS
AGO I DREAMED
THAT I HELD
YOUR HAND.**

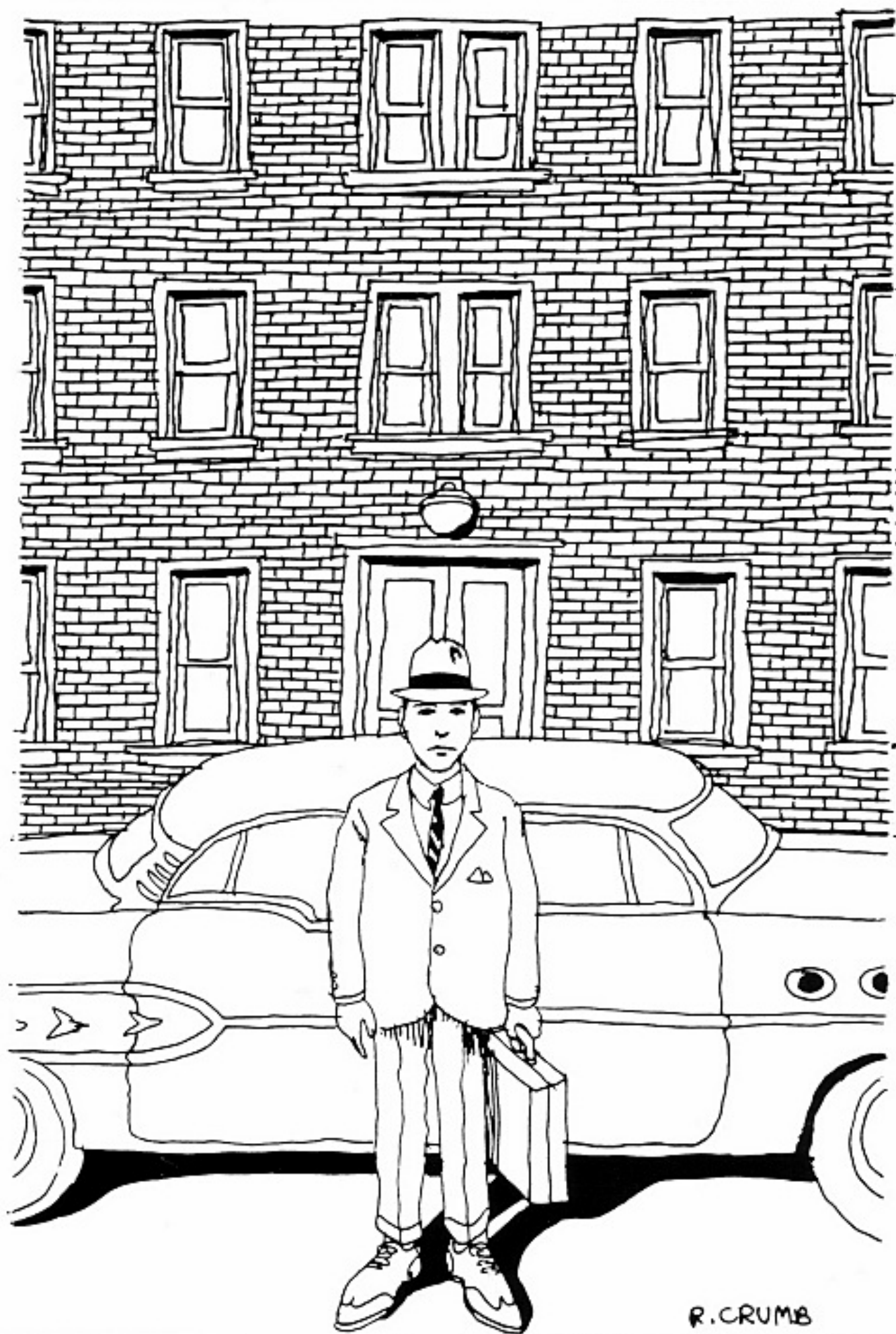
**I'D WRITE MORE,
BUT, HO HUM.... IT'S
TIME TO HIT THE
OLD SACK
AGAIN!!**

**NIGHT BEFORE
LAST I DREAMED
THAT I KISSED
YOU!**



**LAST NIGHT
I DREAMED
THAT I KISSED
YOU AND
HUGGED YOU
ALL OVER!!**





—continued from front flap

But Robert's own satirical claws were out for Fritz. The cat was a poseur: as struggling student, sensitive *artiste*, self-assured cocksman, stemwinder salesman, even CIA operative supreme. His posturing was taken seriously by others because, first of all, Fritz took it seriously himself. However, Robert saw to it that this egotistic role-playing kept Fritz in hot water. Barrels of it.

Much as Robert liked Europe, he saw that to depend on checks from Cleveland was to tempt famine. So, as soon as his back pay came through, he and Dana caught the first thing Icelandic Airways could lift to the States—and thence to Cleveland once more, and American Greetings.

In 1965, Kurtzman invited Crumb to come work for *Help!*. Robert was "completely thrilled at the idea of working with Kurtzman." Terry Gilliam had left, and Robert was confident he could replace him as assistant on *Help!*. "I jumped at that chance." Crumb and his wife arrived in New York City on a hot day, and found a claustrophobic one-room studio in Yorkville. Then he dropped by the *Help!* office—to learn that the magazine that very day had folded.

What kept Robert afloat during this New York sojourn was a series of assignments from another Kurtzman contact: Woody Gelman of Topps bubble gum cards' art studio. "I was getting the impression very quick in New York that you could work like a dog, but if you didn't get out of this low level, you could live in some shithole of a place and just work your ass off." The precise, technical expertise of the "beaten dogs" at Topps was "demanding, way over what I thought I was capable of handling. I just didn't have the tight finished professional approach. I felt very inadequate about it."

Robert left New York with a head full of guilt and acid fuzz, and under his arm a sketchbook that would one day spin many heads: Not just new comics, but an entirely new *kind* of comics—or comix.

—from the introduction
by Marty Pahl



Dana & R. Crumb, 1966.

The Complete Crumb Comics Vol. 3: Starring Fritz The Cat continues the multi-volume series comprising the complete works of the legendary cartoonist *R. Crumb*, one of America's most original, trenchant, and uncompromising satirists. The series includes the earliest, heretofore unpublished comic strips, as well as his underground comix, dramatic and autobiographical strips, and his classic cartoon creations, Fritz the Cat and Mr. Natural.



"Newly married, in a strange land thousands of miles from America, Robert Crumb collated the confusion of inspirations and images that both attracted and repelled him about his native country, its inhabitants, and himself: the beatniks and bourgeois, folkers and rockers, blacks and radicals, poets and potheads. He conjured the lure of *The Road*, big fast cars, hitchhiking, bumming the railroads, crashing parties; even the understated narrow-tie cool of the JFK/LBJ-era government secret agents of paperback and television glory.

"Robert dressed his less-than-Great society in animal skins, and into them he sent a cat named Fritz... Robert first pencilled short, lighthearted Fritz adventures in small, blue-lined composition books. But the impressive, blank, waiting pages of 'the big book' seemed to demand more, both of the artist and his creation."

MARTY PAHLS

from his introduction to this volume

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